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An intersectional critical discourse analysis

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The construction of gender in professional discourses in child protection services in Chile: An intersectional critical discourse analysis

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law

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Abstract

Child protection is a complex and sentitive area of Social Policy. Research has increasingly suggested a gender bias in professional and institutional approaches to families. To a lesser extent, other sources of bias have been mentioned such as class and ethnicity, particularly in contexts with an indigenous population. This research is still confined to evidence from Western English-speaking countries, with no studies in Latin America, where these sources of bias are salient in the context of inter-ethnic relations, and where cultural constructions play a significant role in gender identities.

This study explored constructions of mothers and fathers in a sample of three child protection organisations located in a southern region in Chile. By applying a combination of qualitative methods based on thematic analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis and an intersectional lens, the research focussed on the impact of gendered constructions in their interactions with class and ethnicity on professional discourses. The data was a sample of 18 case files and interviews with 13 practitioners, plus a review of organisational guidelines.

Findings revealed a gendering process, visible in practitioners and institutional constructions of mothers and fathers. Through discourses observed, normative assumptions on mothering and fathering led to an unequal assessment of parenting that consistently scrutinised and blamed mothers while constructing fathers as unaccountable. Under Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity, this process is understood as support for male privilege, which matches maternalist ideology in Latin America, configuring a gender regime. One contribution of this study is the evidence of racial bias for male hegemony as it was found consistently exonerating non-indigenous men's violence and failures in fathering compared to indigenous men. They were subject to more control within the system.

Overall, findings support the endorsement of a gender division of parenting and a monolithic social construction of motherhood as a discourse embedded in professional approaches to families. This appeared rooted in cultural constructions of gender relations and parenting, with Western assimilationist practices being applied to indigenous families.

"Consciousness is the first step towards emancipation" (Fairclough, 1989:01)

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the women I knew in my role as a child protection professional. They were the ones illuminating the idea of this study with their experiences of inequality. This is an attempt to bring justice to their misinterpreted dilemmas.

To my grandmother, whose enduring pain as a mother in the unequal place life situated her has long left me to reflect on the nature of womanhood.

To Victor, my dear son, who, at just 10 years old is growing up as a gender-conscious boy.

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Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that is has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed:

Date:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CP	Child Protection
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CRC	Committee of the Rights of the Child
LA	Latin America
GAD	Gender and Development
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
OCAS	Organismos colaboradores acreditados/ Authorised collaborator organisations
SENAME	Servicio Nacional de Menores/National Service for Minors
SERNAM	Servicio Nacional de la Mujer/National Service for Women
UNCRC	United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
INE	Instituto nacional de estadísticas / National institute of Statistics
INDH	Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos/ National Institute of Human Rights
UNDP/ PNUD	United Nations Programme for Development.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Situating the study

This study is about gender in child protection practice. It started as a personal preoccupation emerging from my professional experience as a psychologist working in child protection settings in Chile for 13 years. This experience made me aware and preouccupied with practices that often put higher expectations on women as parents, resulting in many occasions women-blaming. In this research, I have translated this observation into a quest for understanding in depth what mobilise practitioners to such an approach, while interrogating the Chilean model of social policies and its legacies.

It is of common knowledge that child protection (CP) work is a highly sensitive and complex area of social policy. It not only reflects the policies that provide its framework, but also the professional practices informing them. Perspectives on childhood and family are necessarily embedded in both the policy and practice dimensions. With children as dependent on parents and carers, notions of family dynamics and socially assigned roles emerge as integral to this work. Accordingly, expectations of parenting practices embodied in fathers and mothers become displayed in routine practices. As a result, policy and practice in this area are often guided according to such constructions, and not exclusively driven by apparently neutral policy aims. Expectations are more often fueled by assumptions and values that materialise upon closer inspection of the discourses underpinning them.

As part of these assumptions, gender necessarily emerges as a category since the assigned roles of parents or carers and expectations attached are underpinned by gendered constructions. As a result, and as suggested by previous research (Scourfield, 2003, Parton *et al.*, 1997, Farmer and Owen, 1995, Humphreys and Absler, 2011) professional approaches in policy and practice define the respective roles of mothers and fathers differently. Accordingly, gender is relevant to policy and practice in child welfare and protection.

Over the last twenty years, a body of scholarly literature across the English-speaking world reveals the role that pervasive discourses have wielded within this area (Humphreys and Absler, 2011). This body of research points out the consistent focus on mothers, underpinned by a *failure to protect* discourse since CP issues are often intertwined with domestic violence (Hester 2011, Mullender *et al*., 2002, Stanley and Humphreys, 2015). The gendered nature of CP has been identified within research conducted addressing different aspects involved in professional responses to child abuse and violence within families. Hester (2010) has emphasised the need to address the 'process of gendering' that blames mothers

across practices. However, how the construction of gender occurs remains underexplored. Scourfield (2003) concludes that a lacuna in research to date is the role the construction of gender plays in practitioners' overall interpretation of clients.

While there is research on the subject, this is mainly rooted in the specific contexts found in the English-speaking world. This type of research and the interest in the subject has neglected other contexts that are not part of the dominant Western Global North matrix or WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich and Democratic) countries as they have been recently dubbed (Mignolo, 2010, Adams *et al.*, 2018). In that respect, the issues faced by developing or third world countries, or less pejoratively, the Global South[1], have been consistently neglected, especially issues faced within Latin America (LA). Although some studies have identified how gender is implicated little analytical attention has been paid to the cultural dimension and specific dynamics of LA contexts, which are shaped by colonisation processes. Issues related to the profound structural inequalities resulting from this legacy must be considered within their specific gender, class and race divisions. These are necessarily reflected in many of the issues at play in child welfare and protection policy and practice. Additionally, the need to look at the complexities of gender relations and the role that well-established cultural assumptions have historically played in buttressing gender inequality needs to be documented in a region where such research is scarce.

Within this understanding, although the primary focus of this thesis is how gender is implicated in the constructions of men and women in their roles as parents in CP practice in Chile, ethnicity, class and location are embedded within this analysis. It is argued that the micro-culture of CP reproduces discourses of family and gender roles that are shaped by the wider social order and its cultural constructions, where these other categories are intertwined in the reproduction of discourses.

Thus, this research is intended to provide additional insight into the interaction of professional practices and their underpinning discourses with gender dynamics and assumptions held in a particular context of Chile. Thus, it is a study of gender in CP but reaching the construction of organisational discourses as coming from the wider social order. Cultural aspects must be considered, given the presence of an indigenous population and the processes of colonisation that have shaped gender relations historically.

[1] "The global South is a relational concept that emphasises unequal forms of power relations, both historically (colonial regimes for example) and contemporaly, between the North (the West) and South (the 'rest'). The Global South can be understood as an umbrella term comprising a given set of countries or continents, typically many countries in Africa, central and Latin America and parts of Asia" Richardson, D. (2015, p.4)

1.1. Research aims

This study seeks to explore and analyse how gender may be implicated in professional discourses and how societal/cultural constructions may play a role in practices developed with families in child protection settings in Chile. This aim is broken down into:

- Identifying dominant discourses and narratives reflected in professional or practitioners' everyday tasks in child protection organisations in Chile.
- Identifying and explore to what extent theoretical or organisational approaches interact with underlying gendered assumptions.
- Analysing the barriers that these discourses may represent in delivering effective and coherent professional interventions with families.

With those aims considered, the research questions that guide this project are:

RQ1. What kind of constructions appears as dominant and shared by CP practitioners in Chile in relation to mothers and fathers and how gender may be implicated?

RQ2.What is the meaning that professionals have given to gender throughout their practices?

RQ3. What theories and approaches, implicit and explicit, may appear to guide professional practices and how they might interact with their constructions on gender?

1.2. Scope and design

For this research, it is understood that gendered constructions and the expectations they generate are defined and expressed through discourses reflected in professional practices as in any other form of social practice. Consequently, a method departing from an interpretive approach was chosen. This combined analysis of 18 case files in three CP teams complemented with 13 interviews with the practitioners responsible for the interventions. The analytical framework combined thematic analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) guiding the exploration of practices seen in text and talk in the data collected.

This research examines discourses shared and how gender is implicated. By taking a case study of three teams in a region in Chile, it is situated within the Chilean CP system. The contribution expands upon previous literature by analysing a different context, making visible the situation of gender dynamics in Chile, with its impact in professional practices.

1.3. Theoretical framework and research standpoint

This thesis is overall an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary project that draws on and contributes to different frameworks of knowledge. Regarding the impact of gendered discourses, the main framework is gender studies in a Southern perspective as proposed by Connell (2014). Considering crossover with other CP contexts, a transnational feminist standpoint is assumed, since this research tries to address gender inequality, which, as shown by the empirical literature, is a global issue.

1.3.1. Gender as a construction

An understanding of gender as being inextricably linked to 'cultural constructions' (Scott, 1986) is assumed in this thesis. This allows an analysis of the structural and symbolic order where the reproduction of normative framings of masculine and feminine occurs. This framing often takes place within a binary matrix that involves assumptions of subordination in gender relations. Such assumptions have followed naturalistic conceptualisations of gender (Lazar, 2007, Connell, 1987). Social constructionist approaches (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) have challenged the reductionism that turned biological differences into normative social expectations (Connell, 1987) opening the path to establishing a conceptualisation of gender as socially constructed.

Connell has defined gender as:

> *Gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes* (2002, p. 10).

This definition is key to understanding, for instance how motherhood has been attached to the construction of womanhood as assumptions made about men and women' s bodies tend to fail within constructions of the 'natural', biologically determined. Thus, an understanding of gender as the social construction of biological differences is what informs this research, as this has been central in debates in LA.

1.3.2. Hegemonic masculinity

Following Connell's sociology of gender, the main framework for this thesis follows an analysis of gender inequality as the construction of relations of domination and subordination contained in Connell's development of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987,

1995, Connell and Messerdchmidt, 2005). This allows an understanding of the privileged position of men in society but also accounts for different positionalities according to constructions of masculinities that will be discussed in this thesis.

1.3.3. Gender in organisational cultures

As Harlow and Hearn (1995) have argued, gender is reproduced in organisational cultures, as these are systems of shared assumptions, values and rules. As such, organisational cultures reproduce masculinity and feminity discourses that depart from the construction of gender. As this is the central aim of this research in the culture of CP, another conceptual tool taken from Connell's work is the idea of gender regimes (1987). These are patterns of gender arrangements and relations, presented as "the overall pattern of gender relations within an organisation" (Connell, 2006, p.389). Gender regimes involve the reproduction of a wider gender order. This concept has shed light on the ways that gendered processes are to be found across social practices and institutions and across professional organisations, where gender relations are reproduced and reinforced in all spheres of life (Connell, 2006). Therefore, gender forms part of the whole social order, at the cultural and institutional level, varying from one society to another (Walby, 2009). Gender regimes and hegemonic masculinity are, then, interconnected concepts, as hegemonic masculinity reproduces a gender regime and this, in turn, impacts upon dynamics of public institutions.

1.3.4. Cultural studies and cultural psychology: towards a cultural analysis of gendered constructions

The study of gender in LA needs to consider cultural difference and the interplay of different sources of identity, such as race and ethnicity. There is then, a need to account for the specificities of culture shaping the construction of gender.

Within this framework I bring together Cultural studies and cultural psychology to develop the analysis of individual and collective identity formation, being these identities gendered and culturally determined. This analysis problematises universalism with its lack of appropriacy in the context of indigenous heritage. Within such approach, Hall's (1997) articulation of identity as being shaped by race and post-colonial relationships appears relevant. In particular, the understanding of the tensions and contradictions resulting from the shifting and moving between cultures, which is the experience of the colonised in the shaping of identities. Such understanding is compatible with a transnational project that recognises the diversity of experiences according to culture while overcoming universalising and

homogenising discourses that pathologise practices of non-dominant groups or WEIRD countries. In line with this analysis and, as resulting from the hybridity of cultures that has occurred in LA, I introduce the concept of Marianismo to the analysis of gender identity and relations.

1.3.5. Marianismo

Marianismo is a conceptualisation developed by Stevens (1973) in her essay *Marianismo: the other face of machismo in Latin America*. In this work, Marianismo reflects an ideological discourse of modelling women upon the idealised image of the Virgin Mary as a normative female identity. Marianismo articulates the moral superiority of women around virtues such as self-denial, purity, and most importantly, the centrality of motherhood, as introduced by colonisation and Catholic gender norms. In this thesis, I take Marianismo as reworked by Chilean anthropologist Sonia Montecino (1996) in her articulation around the country's collective identity. In this research, linking with Connell's work on hegemonic masculinity as a normative ideal of manhood I understand Marianismo as the complementary, as a normative ideal of womanhood. As analysed by Stevens (1973) Marianismo and machismo are complementary as they reinforce each other (Kiran *et al*, 2015). As discussed in this thesis, the notion of complementary relations is key to understand gender relations and and the way they have been embraced in LA societies.

1.4. Intersectionality

To understand the complexities of gender identity formation and relations in the context of this power relations that operate in society, this thesis is also informed by intersectionality as an analytical tool. Intersectionality means a feminist approach that recognises gender inequality does not follow universal patterns, as it clearly overlaps with other identity categorisations feeding into other forms of inequality and oppression (Walby, 2011, Crenshaw 1989). This framework is relevant for LA, where intersectionality may dialogue with decolonial and cultural studies.

1.5. From post- colonial to thinking decolonial

Sharing the cultural studies ethos, I link to a decolonial standpoint seeking to situate knowledge construction in a way that considers the contexts and their particularities. This standpoint involves highlighting the role of culture and resisting universal claims and hierarchies of knowledge production. Thus, a decolonial standpoint seeks to visibilise a

neglected region. This is achieved by a transnational feminist commitment that enters into dialogue with relevant literature from the Global South, southern theory as Connell has conceptualised it (see Connell, 2007, 2014) with key findings reached so far at an international perspective.

Following this standpoint, I must clarify that I do not follow a postcolonial framing. For the same reasons I do not draw on poststructuralist theory as I share the view of decolonialist scholars (Bacigalupo, 2003, Mignolo, 2006) that colonialism and the structures of oppression derived from it, while not operating in the form of an imperial order any longer, linger albeit disguised within subtle nuances of *coloniality.* Following Quijano's (2000) *coloniality of power*, decolonialists speak of *coloniality* to denote the pervasiveness of the power relations enacted through racial classification of the world emerging with colonisation. They survive as a Eurocentric capitalist colonial paradigm (Quijano, 2000), reflected in hierarchies of knowledge production that privileges Western paradigms, leading to the *epistemicide*, the erasing of pre-colonial episteme and knowledge by the Global North paradigm of modernity. This has been analysed by Spivak (1988) in India and by De Sousa Santos (2014) in LA, as part of the process of coloniality, by which subaltern identities are created.[2]

As an epistemological and ontological standpoint, one aim of this research is contributing to reducing the invisibility and subordination of the Global South, opening a discussion on the hierarchies of knowledge production and dissemination that challenges coloniality. As said, we have not overcome colonialism; therefore, I do not frame this research within a post-colonialism umbrella.

In this way, all the frameworks outlined here are placed in dialogue to articulate an analysis that is pertinent to the context, moves beyond a Western paradigm in a decolonial commitment to discuss other ways of thinking when complexity is involved, as it is studying gender in the Global South.

[2] The concept of subaltern identity appears in this study as used in decolonial and post-colonial studies to refer the construction of identities that become subordinated to the colonisers in the assertion of colonial superiority of European whiteness. The concept has been discussed in Subaltern studies in India (See Spivak, G. (1988) Can the subaltern speak? In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds). *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. London: Macmillan). Decolonial studies have also integrated the concept to highlight the hierarchial construction and classification emerging with the colonial project and its impact on identities. (See Grosfoguel, R. (2010). The epistemic decolonial turn beyond political - economy paradigms. In Walter Mignolo and Arturo Escobar (eds.). *Globalization and the Decolonial turn*. London: Routledge).

1.6. Thesis overview

Chapter 1 sets the aims of this research and identifies significant gaps in the research to date. It also sets the analytical framework and develops the key conceptualisations that will guide analysis of the findings.

Chapter 2 situates the context both from a historical perspective that informs policy and practice frameworks and allows a better understanding of the Chilean CP system and its underpinnings. It is argued that gender has been historically involved in discourses regarding the care of children and their outcomes, as well as other sources of discrimination that characterise the country's current situation.

Chapter 3 develops a review of the literature. Firstly, I present an overview of the available literature on CP and gender, at the international level, outlining the main issues identified. Then I move on to characterise what is known of studies in LA and Chile while discussing a conceptualisation of gender that is culturally situated, outlining differences and particularities.

Chapter 4 outlines, describes and discuss the methods I followed to collect and analyse the data for this research with a discussion of CDA.

Chapter 5 presents the findings organised according to a thematic analysis conducted on the data, where main issues are identified, described and discussed.

Chapter 6 also follows a thematic analysis but applies an intersectional perspective that can better inform the nature of the narratives described as issues related not only to gender, but also to class and ethnicity and geographical belonging, which emerged as relevant.

Chapter 7 presents the CDA of the professional accounts that have been revealed in previous chapters. This chapter brings them together to deconstruct the process by which these narratives and categories are constructed in the context described. It discusses the construction of distinguishable and shared discourses and what is influencing them.

In chapter 8 I discuss the key findings of this research outlining an interpretation and reflection on them by bringing the literature reviewed to enlighten the analysis.

In chapter 9 I develop the conclusions drawn from this study linked to the implications regarding professional practices, making recommendations vis-à-vis policy and research in the area.

CHAPTER TWO

The Chilean road to the care of vulnerable children: a history of class, gender, and a neoliberal experiment

Introduction

In this chapter, I set the context of this research, which is organised into three main sections. The first is a brief historical account of the development of the CP system and the frameworks informing it. The second section describes the current system in its organisational structure and frameworks for practice, while discussing some critiques. Thirdly, the system is situated in the broader context of policies, bringing a discussion on how gender has become institutionalised in the broader public policy framework and in children's policies. By linking a historical account with organisational and policy features, the chapter provides the context where this research took place, outlining the main tensions observed.

2.1. From philanthropy to the professionalisation of the care of children: the place of women

A recent UN report from the Committee on the Rights of the Child has claimed that the Chilean CP system has systematically failed the rights of children in residential care (CRC, 2018). The report is clear in highlighting this failure as "systematic", as a result of nearly 40 years of inaction. I will return later to the details of this claim as, it could be argued, as I set out below, this goes significantly beyond 40 years. The Chilean CP system and the policies underpinning it can be analysed as a 'history of the present', as the historical is an essential aspect shedding light on predominant discourses (Fairclough, 2003).

The institutionalisation of the care of children in Chile developed in hand with its birth as a nation. The transition from a Spanish colony to a republic revealed the inequalities inherited from colonisation, with clear racial and class hierarchies that are still an enduring legacy of the Chilean society. This is still discernible from many aspects. For instance, the ruling economic and political power is still within the network of families emerging as the ruling elite during the colonial era and, in control of key areas of the economy. This defines a system of enduring inequality (Cárcamo *et al.*, 2014), reflected in Chile's significant and persistent gap between rich and poor[3]. This is associated with an oligarchical heritage, with a State role often ambiguous, highly centralised and punitive. The combination of

[3] According to the World Bank (2017) Chile Gini index was 47.7 in 2015, being at the time the most unequal of the OECD countries (OECD (2016c). *Society at a glance. OECD social indicators*, Paris).

authoritarianism and a weak network of social support has certainly characterised its paternalism in policy design (Molyneux, 2008), aspects that have shaped the development of the CP and welfare system.

Chile's path in the institutionalisation of the CP and welfare system followed the rest of LA. This evolved from charity and philanthropy during the colonial era to the current framework shaped by the integration of the UNCRC following democratisation across the Southern Cone since the early nineties (Pilloti, 1999). The institutional concern about children in need emerged within early strategies to alleviate the situation of the poor. This goes back to colonial arrangements and the visible role of the Catholic Church with the setting of the *Casa de Expósitos* (Foundling's House) in 1758, a source predominantly used by lone mothers in deprived conditions (García and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014). This was the first institution for children in need, a historical witness of the institutionalisation of policies for their care. Taken under State control in 1853 and renamed as the *Casa del Niño* (Children House), is the starting point of an alliance between religious charity and the State. This strategy further expanded over the years across the country, surviving until today through some well-recognised CP institutions in Chile.

In these early arrangements, failures exposed class, race and gender as interwoven elements shaping the approaches implemented to deal with the plight of vulnerable children. This occurred under the conditions in which Chile moved from a colonial regime to a republic. The period saw rapid urbanisation, internal migration and precarious labour conditions that favoured the ruling elite (Pieper Mooney, 2009), echoing the colonial legacy. This is exemplified by issues of the exploitation of young children at the first Orphans' House, which mobilised State control as the children were found to be trained as a labour force for upper-class families. This is documented by historiographic research (Milanich, 2004, 2009). The 'circulation of children' during nineteenth century Chile (Milanich, 2009) became naturalised through informal and institutional arrangements, becoming a widespread practice to deal with poverty. Better off families were found receiving children nonrelated to them to be reared, given by either the Orphan's House or their families directly, taken mainly as servants. A gendered analysis reveals that girls were favoured for this practice owing to the domestic labour they could serve, as well as indigenous children commercialised in conditions of masked slavery (Rojas, 2010).

Gender is also remarkable in a second phase that started as early as 1900, still within a philanthropic framework, under a medicalised hygienistic approach. Led by the medical profession, who were part of the ruling political elite, it framed the care of children as

prophylaxis of the abandonment (Shonhaut, 2010). This philantrophic crusade for children was profoundly shaped by the politics of nation-building with increasing infant mortality rates amongst the poor perceived as a threat to State prosperity. Infant mortality was indeed regarded at the time as one of the highest in the world (Shonhaut, 2010; Allende, 1939), placing the care of children as future citizens and a future labour force as a priority within policy design (Illanes, 2006). It was here that gender became visible in State policies, where discourses of 'unfit' and 'ignorant' mothers were constructed as the cause of child mortality and abandonment (Pieper Mooney, 2009). Overt blaming linked the epidemic with mothers' lack of care while placing them at the centre of policies aimed at children. This was in line with international trends that started to be imported, such as maternal asylums and health centres for children to be fed and cared for, as the so-called *Gotas de leche* centres (drops of milk centres) in 1912, named after a French model (Illanes, 2006). Thus, under this medicalised discourse, within the health sector, the care of children in need was framed as linked to mothers' caring performance.

This discourse legitimised the close surveillance of mothers, performed initially at the *Gotas de Leche* centres but then further expanded to the homes. This task was assigned to the first body of female health visitors, an 'army of women' (Pieper Mooney, 2009) under male control. This approach led Chile in 1925 to the founding of the first school of social work in LA (Illanes 2006). The aim was to train elite women who emerged from health visitors to be *social visitors* as in Chile these first social workers were known as the *visitadoras (visiting professionals),* as the main site for their work was the home. This female force was the link between the State and the poor, setting up a paradigm highly rooted in paternalism. Until now, social work in Chile remains a feminised discipline, where constructions of gender are reflected.

The gendering of policy design became institutionalised through the salient role of these *visitadoras* (visiting professionals) as fit to intervene with the 'unfit' mothers. They were the starting point of a professional discourse, targeting children and poor mothers (Illanes, 2006). Pieper Mooney (2009) has analysed Chilean *beneficient maternalism*, as the mobilising of women's gendered qualities in the understanding that they can assist less fortunate women and their children. This beneficient maternalism was reflected in the strategies pursued in the instruction of the "unfit" working class and peasant mothers that emphasised proper mothering as an extension of their own maternalist essentialised identity. Caring for the poor was a maternal quality.

Zarate (2018) argues that the State crusade in favour of the dyad of mother-child was part of the 'social issue' preoccupation. It departed from the essentialist position of women as mothers to define them as a primarily social function, key to nation-building, while justifying the *managed motherhood*[4] approach (Pieper Mooney, 2009). Gender was central to the promotion of the family unit shaped by a division of labour that defined gender roles with a breadwinner's model that fit the path to capitalism the country started to head in (Brito, 2005). This process occurred through strategies of subtle and sometimes overt disciplining over the working class, with moralist discourses that problematised non-marital cohabitation, promoting marriage among poor men (Strasser and Tinsman, 2010). One central issue involved was the social stigmatisation attached to the children born out of wedlock, a condition which increased from 30% in 1890 to 40% in 1920 (Milanich, 2009, p.15). These children were legally and socially considered illegitimate or '*huachos'*[5], only associated with their single mothers who experienced the burden in poverty conditions with the lack of social support. Thus, a familial discourse emerged out of this moral concern by placing men as breadwinners with women as carers at home.

2.1.1. The legal discourse of the 'irregular situation' doctrine

As described, early provisions for children were mainly developed within the health sector, which promoted professionalisation under a medicalised discourse and emergent institutionalisation. This discourse required a different framework to become a strategy of social control. In this phase, the introduction of the judicial framework served to legitimise State intervention work with families. It was aimed at regulating the situation of children from vulnerable families, and more specifically the situation of young children who, out of segregation and poverty conditions, were found in the streets, under different strategies of survival such as begging or vagrancy (Rojas, 2010). Being regarded as young delinquents, this concern turned into the judicialisation with the introduction of the Law of Minors in 1928 following a trend across LA (Pilloti, 1999). Under this law, the problem of children

[4] Managed motherhood is a conceptualisation used by Pieper Mooney (2009) in her account of the development of State intervention with women within the hygienistic and medicalised framework outlined that established as legitimate the supervision of mothers' performance as a strategy to address social disease (See Pieper Mooney, J. (2009). *The politics of Motherhood: Maternity and women's rights in twentieth- century Chile*. Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press.

[5] Huacho is a word coming from the indigenous Quechua language used for adultery. In Chile, it was introduced during the colony to refer to someone born out of wedlock, or more generally, an orphan, or someone of dubious origins. Usually used to insult someone, as a strong social stigma is attached to it, is generally applied to those without a father, regardless of being with their mothers. Thus, it cannot be translated as orphan or bastard because what defines the essence of the concept is the nature of being born from a single mother out of wedlock and rejected by his father. The concept is so crucial to understanding social and gender divisions in Chile that has been subject of a scholarly analysis. See Salazar, G. (2006). *Ser niño "Huacho" en la Historia de Chile* (siglo XIX). Santiago: LOM Ediciones, Montecino, S. (1996). *Sobre madres y huachos: alegorías del mestizaje chileno*. Santiago: Cuarto Propio.

abandoned or without carers was framed under the category of children 'in an irregular situation'. The doctrine of 'social irregularity', common in LA (Muñoz, 2013) brought children in need of care under the same arrangements as those framed under the offending behaviour paradigm. The use of orphanages and correctional institutions became more widespread and was handled by the figure of the Court of Minors (Maldonado, 2014) This was retained with the definitive Law of Minors redrafted in 1967 (Law. 16618, Biblioteca Nacional), marking the beginning of a doctrine which is still in place, as CP remains in Chile as part of the Ministry of Justice, under the same Law of Minors.The result has been the dominance of a legal discourse that assumes a tutelary role, shaping policy and practice concerning children and families in need.

This development echoes Donzelot's account (1980), of the system developed in Europe, specifically in France. The policing of families he describes under the emergence of the 'social' and the disciplines that were converging in social work defined the State's intervention in families. The features described are seen in the path followed by Chile. This saw the 'philanthropic pole'and the 'medical hygienist pole' as described above. They were converging in a moralisation discourse through the promotion of the nuclear family. Most importantly for the understanding of the birth of CP work and its underpinnings is what Donzelot describes as 'the tutelary complex' ending in a dual system that brings under state control the 'children in danger' and 'dangerous' children or delinquents' minors (Donzelot, 1980, p.96). The professionalisation trend described in Chile saw the emergence of the disciplines advising the courts, with the development of categories to name the social diseases found in families, like the 'dysfunctional' with the emergence of the 'Psy' or psychological discourse in the State interventions targeting families.

2.1.2 The authoritarianism and the neoliberal shaping

An understanding of the current state of CP in Chile cannot be complete without mentioning the impact of the legacy of the 17 years of Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990). Along with the historical trauma of well-known human rights' violations, a neoliberal public policy doctrine severely fragmented the State apparatus. The economic adjustment forced by the implementation of a 'laboratory of neoliberalism', as it is known today (Nef, 2003) saw increasing segregation throughout the 1980s that exacerbated existing wealth inequalities. Given the lack of welfare state support and within this trend of dismantling public services, there was an increasingly tendency towards the institutionalisation of children in 'irregular situations' within the context of a high unemployment society, with ever-increasing poverty

and extreme poverty rates in low- income families (Davis-Hamel, 2012). This created the conditions for these families to be perceived as failing their role. Residential institutions started to receive children, with some of them still under the Catholic Church's administration, as well as some of other Christian organisations. Some institutions were also sponsored by military forces, which as Rojas (2010) analyses, served to legitimise the dictatorship under a discourse of patriotism. With some NGOs that remain until today and started over this period, especially at the end of the eighties and early nineties (Rojas, 2010), a model of shared functioning became naturalised in public policy. This is the association of public and private, with the State externalising services, as it will be further described in the section below.

2.2. SENAME: the Chilean CP nightmare

SENAME (Servicio Nacional de Menores/National Service for Minors) is the current government managing body administering CP system provisions. It was created in 1979 (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, 2015) under Pinochet's regime to:

> "develop actions to assist, and protect, stimulate and orientate the minors and to coordinate and technically supervise the work done by the public and private organisations that help with these functions" (Decree 2.456, art. 1,1979, Biblioteca Nacional).

SENAME functions with a centralised national office and regional subordinated offices across the 16 regions of the country. The current mission is "to contribute to the promotion, protection and restitution of children and young people's rights when they have been violated, and for the accountability and social reintegration of young people breaking the law" (SENAME, 2018). Since its creation, the design of SENAME changed the role of the State from guarantor to that of a subsidiary. SENAME only administrates public funding given to the private organisations providing services, known since then as 'collaborator organisations', and more recently, OCAS (organismos colaboradores acreditados/ qualified collaborator organisations). OCAS are not-for-profit organisations developing interventions with children and families for SENAME following their guidelines. Within this framework, the function of the State is delegated or externalised, according to the marketised system introduced by Pinochet's regime as part of a programme of neoliberalisation that impacted on social policy provisions (Barrientos *et al*., 2008). Within this neoliberal framing, a scheme of

funding is offered to OCAS (Muñoz, 2013) to develop their work. This scheme impacted upon the system as a legacy of this period[6]. Once democracy was recovered from 1990 onwards, this was remarkably exposed as being in tension with the principles emanated from the UNCRC that Chile signed in 1990 (Maldonado, 2014). This marked a shift from the irregular situation doctrine, embedded in the Law of Minors, to the children's rights approach, where the massive institutionalisation did not fit well. The system then, faced the task of the deinstitutionalisation of children, under a reintegration framework. This involved the reduction of residential care provisions run by different OCAS that not always performed well in the task of caring for children, when what families needed was support (Rojas, 2010, Contreras, 2001).

In the current scenario and despite efforts to make the system fit within the paradigm of children's rights, it retains historical tutelary features and the dictatorship's neoliberal framing, contributing to its reputation as a nightmare system across the public opinion. For instance, within the current legal and administrative framework, the OCAS assisting SENAME go through a process of public tender that sets the technical requirements. Under a modified scheme established in 2005, funding is provided by proposals which are renewed periodically (Muñoz, 2013) and are subject to the assessment of results. These are assessed through goals specified in quantitative measures of performance. Practitioners must accomplish a minimum of interventions per month, recording their work on an IT integrated system called SENAINFO that provides SENAME with statistics and the evidence of goals, which is highly managerial in character. Critics have found this model of funding highly problematic. First, as an assignation of funding is given within a market competition framework, different organisations whom are specialised in the same type of services compete with one another creating tensions amongst teams and organisations that become reluctant to share successful practices and approaches (Andrade and Arancibia, 2010, p. 139). Regarding organisational issues, the instability created by the conditionality of programmes and the competition has resulted in precarity for the workforce. This, along with low salaries and lack of incentive increases staff turnover (Muñoz, 2013), with positions having more often to be filled with recently graduated practitioners, as it is not an attractive area for experienced professionals.

[6] With the first scheme, set during the dictatorship, funding was given per child, with higher amounts for those in residential care. Over the years this resulted in a perverse practice that promoted the institutionalisation of children out of this monetary incentive and saw the number of children in residential settings increased from 32.000 to 48.000 between 1979 and 1989 (Rojas, 2010).

Another crucial issue is that, given this externalisation of services, a public policy, which is overall sensitive, is to be implemented by private organisations, with a diversity of discourses, ideologies and operative capacities (Andrade y Arancibia, 2010). While SENAME has only a few residencies under its direct management, most are private[7]. The main problem has been the lack of direct and close supervision, resulting in historical deficiencies (Rojas, 2010) that have severely damaged the public reputation of SENAME with persistent failures found in the care of children[8] (Muñoz, 2013, Guzmán, 2013). The issue has become a concern for both the UN and for local human rights agencies (INDH, 2017) and has locally been mainstreamed across the public opinion as the 'crisis of SENAME' (Pinochet, 2017, García and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2014).

The criticised current administrative framework is expected to be reformulated, although no date has been set to undergone or complete the process, announced in 2000 (Maldonado, 2014). This has remained largely postponed in legislation and policy debates, reflecting its priority level in Chilean policies. Resistance to change is identified specifically in the judicial system, retaining past contradictions that do not fit well with the paradigm of the UNRC, retaining the tutelary doctrine (De la Maza y González, 2016), subject to criticism by the last UN report of the Committee of the Rights of the Child (2018), which has outlined the main problems as:

- The tutelary role and excessive judicialisation of the system.
- The subsidiary role of the State and the tertiarisation of services.
- The philanthropic and paternalist feature.
- The placement of children in residential care to deal with poverty that the State fails to address through family support.

[7] Currently SENAME has declared that 37% of its expenditure is directed to centres under its direct management, mainly residential care institutions, while 63% of its budget goes to the 'private network' or OCAS (SENAME, 2018) This is spread in 28 residential care institutions across the country, being 10 under SENAME direct administration.

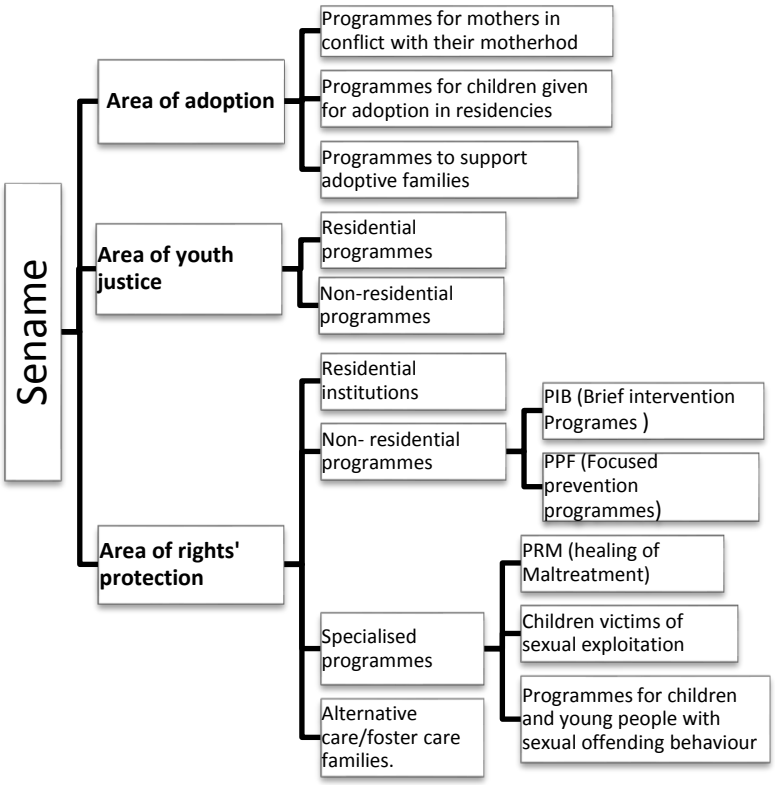
[8] Different reports such as the *Jeldres report* (Family Comision, Camara de diputados, 2013) and the INDH (National Institute of Human Rights, 2017) more recent UN report (2018) have revealed a persistent failure in residential care institutions including child abuse, malnutrition, coercive practices and the death of a significant number of children while in residential care with several children found dead without further investigation

All these critiques have been described in this account as shaped historically and embedded in the State's paternalism. What follows is the description of the current organisational structure of CP services.

2.3. SENAME programmes organisation

SENAME considers different areas of CP intervention, organised in three main key areas of services' provision: area of adoption, rights protection and youth justice, as illustrated below.

Fig. 1. SENAME organisation of programmes.



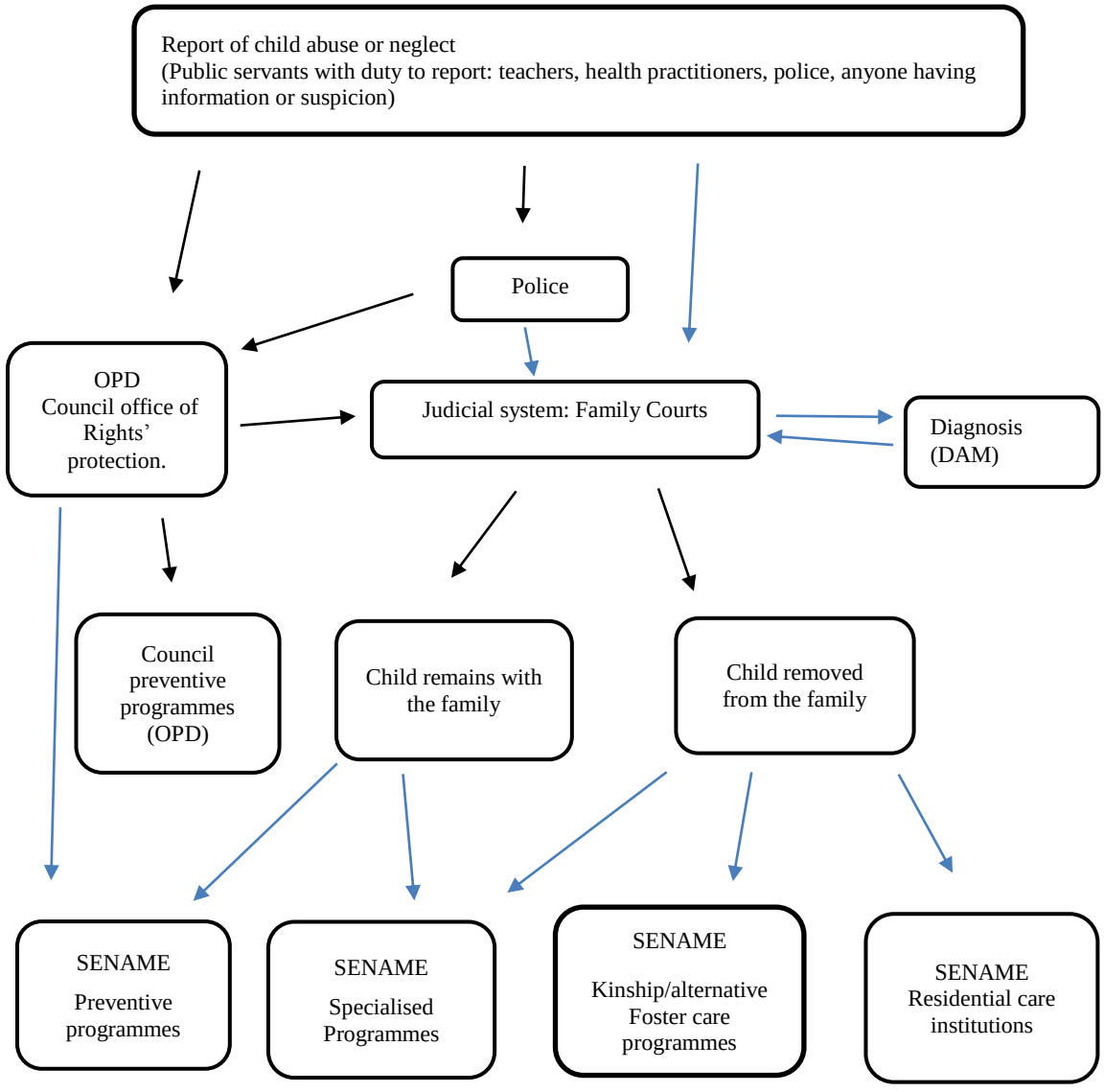
These programmes and the referrals of children to them follow an established criterion according to a level of complexity, with two levels to classify the reasons for referrals:

- Low to medium complexity. Referrals mainly at a preventive level, dealing with issues such as school absenteeism, initial drug misuse, non-severe maltreatment, child victim or perpetrator of bullying, minor offences and family relationships based on persistent violence.

- Medium to high complexity. Situations that require more specialised services, addressing issues going from persistent school absenteeism, drug misuse, child labour, sexual exploitation, offending behaviour with the requirement of separation from families, offending that is a crime, absent families or families with irresponsible neglect, family relationships where violence is predominant.

Latest SENAME statistics show that in the area of rights' protection, where this research is focussed, the first category for referrals is neglect, accounting for 66, 86% of children referred to the system, nationally. This is consistent in the region selected (67%), being the second main reason for violence in the family, reaching 5.8% (SENAME, 2018). The route of referral is shown in diagram below.

Fig. 2. Referral system and CP protection journey



As illustrated in Fig.2, referrals start with a report that can go through the police or the Council office of Children's rights protection (OPD[9]), but also directly to Family Courts. The OPD as part of local councils collaborate with SENAME, acting within a first preventive community framework in situations that do not require judicial proceedings (SENAME, 2018) and can be targetted by brief, non-specialised interventions. However, in cases requiring longer and more specialised provisions referrals reach SENAME. Given SENAME depends on the Ministry of Justice, programmes require a Court order for referrals, which means they become under judicial monitoring. Once a report reaches the Family Court, a decision is made with the assistance of professional assessment requested to Diagnosis teams (DAM), which will be explained in more detail below, as well as the type of main intervention programmes fundamental to this research.

2.3.1 Diagnosis teams (DAM)

In the first stage of the referrals reaching Family Courts, assessment teams, known as DAM are assigned to provide psychosocial diagnosis (social and psychological), that is often a type of forensic assessment of cases referred. This assessment is required to assist the Courts in decision making by providing a professional opinion with recommendations for referral to appropriate intervention programmes, residential care or family. A key component of the assessment and the main issue addressed in the intervention with the families or carers is the parenting capacity assessment, which has increasingly become the main request from Court to DAMS (SENAME, 2012).

2.3.2. Intervention programmes

There is a wide variety of programmes within the three main areas of SENAME as exposed in fig. 1. According to the criteria of complexity explained previously, there are preventive and specialised programmes. As residential care is now reduced, the majority of programmes are non-residential, delivering interventions with families, or foster care families. Two key modalities will be described as they are the types represented in the sample of this research:

a) *PPF (Focussed Prevention Programmes)*

[9] OPD known as Oficina de Proteccion de Derechos (Office of Rights' protection) has been translated as Council office of children's rights protection to make clear its functioning as administered by the Council and framed within a preventive strategy out of statutory measures, different from SENAME.

Aimed at the referrals that involve 'violation of rights at a moderate level' (Sename 2018), these programmes target issues where a brief intervention is needed for the family to overcome low complexity issues. The key strategy is to prevent these issues from becoming persistent problems. The referrals include physical and psychological child abuse that is not severe, intra-family violence that is not a crime, neglect, and others to be addressed without the children being removed from the family.

b) *PRM (Specialised programmes of maltreatment).*

This is a type of program that is mainly psychotherapeutic as it is aimed at healing processes for children victims of severe maltreatment including sexual abuse, which is usually the main reason for referral.

2.4. The teams

Being of a multidisciplinary nature, interventions carried out follow a psychosocial approach. Unlike the UK and other contexts, where social work is the frontline discipline in CP, in Chile, the most distinguishable representative of the frontline services is the psychosocial dyad (*dupla psicosocial*) composed of a social worker and a psychologist, or a psychoeducator, depending on the types of programmes and frameworks. In preventive programmes, usually, a psychoeducative approach is more emphasised rather than a clinical one, which is the type used in the specialised programmes that deal with the healing of maltreatment, where a psychologist is one member of the dyad. Having well defined roles and duties, psychologists and psychoeducators develop their work with children while social workers focus on working with parents or families, despite some joined interventions which also occur. Teams work in close coordination, reflected in formal weekly meetings to discuss cases and defining tasks ahead of individual responsibilities assigned (visits to be made, coordination with other agencies, reports to be written, etc.) as well as everyday informal discussions.

2.4.1. Parenting assessment

Since the return to democracy and within the commitment to reintegrate children in residential care back to their families, parenting and the strategies to address it started to be a key focus of practices. This was also fueled out of the concern and campaigning against child abuse that gained more visibility post-dictatorship. With a democratic regime and as part of the new agenda of commitments at an international level, the situation of children and the CP

provisions gained more emphasis within public policies, and within this, child abuse and parenting. This implied making families responsible and accountable for their children. Most programmes follow an approach of parenting capacity (Contreras *et al*, 2014), highly emphasised in current guidelines and the national policy for children, that will be discussed later.

With the introduction of the notion of parenting capacity, their assessment became an integral part of the CP work in Chile. This began at the end of the nineties and was highly influenced by the work of the Chilean psychiatrist Jorge Barudy, who while working in his political exile in Belgium and Spain became involved in the development of a body of literature and guidelines to intervene with victims of child abuse.

Fundamental to this research is the Barudy parenting capacity assessment guide (Barudy y Dangtanan, 2005, 2010).[10]This tool is based on a set of questionnaires and observations used in most of the programmes, especially by assessment teams (SENAME, 2012). Despite a recent shift in guidelines, promoting the NCFAS assessment guide[11] as a preferred tool, the Barudy y Dangtanan (2005, 2010) guide, with its conceptualisation of parenting capacity seeming to still be informing CP practice with families in Chile. Barudy y Dangtanan (2010, p.23) define parenting capacity as:

> *The practical capacities that mothers and fathers (or significant adults) have to care for, protect and educate their children and guarantee them healthy enough development.*

Within this framework, there is a distinction between parental and *marental*. The latter, a neologism, a word that does not exist as recognised in the Spanish language, is a concept introduced in the publication *Los buenos tratos a la infancia: parentalidad, apego y resiliencia*[12] (Barudy y Dantangnan, 2005). Marental is used to refer to the parenting capacity of the mother. As explained by the authors:

> "This book will use the word parental or *marental* to refer to the functions that mothers, and fathers have to fulfil in order to guarantee the healthy development of their children. To speak

[10] The Barudy's capacity assessment guide assess parenting capacity by looking at five domains, with parents classified according to the criteria of: A. High concern, B. Situation of concern, C. Situation of partial concern, E. Contradictory and no concluding information. Barudy y Dangtanan, (2005, 2010)

[11] The NCFAS (North Carolina Family Assessment Scale) is a scale of family functioning assessment developed by a child welfare team within the services in the USA in 1990. By following an ecological framework, it assesses different dimensions (Gomez & Valencia, 2010). Following a survey with practitioners (SENAME, 2012) a perspective that encourages objective instruments that are quicker and easier to apply favoured the introduction of this guide in Chile, having an adapted version for Chilean population (Gomez & Valencia, 2010).

[12] The good treatment to children: parenting, attachment and resilience.

about *marentalidad* (the mother's parenting) is to acknowledge with one word that in general, that function is done by mothers" (Barudy y Dantangnan, 2005, pp. 35).

This conceptualisation was introduced and promoted by the CP policy guidelines in Chile to distinguish parental or parenting roles from *marental* or the parenting role of mothers. As explained by Barudy y Dantagnan (2005) this concept acknowledges that caring is mostly done by mothers, avoiding conflating mothering/fathering in just the generic "parental or parenting role".

In a later publication[13] they explain that *marentalidad* is the result of complex processes where there is a mix of innate capacities and childhood experiences of good or bad treatment with parents or carers. They emphasise the biological basis of good treatment or good care as genetic (Barudy y Dantagnan, 2014). In the Barudy literature, one key idea is parents as providers of good treatment (buen trato) as opposed to maltreatment, which is a crucial aspect of a healthy parenting. Barudy's notion of parenting stresses that mothers have biological conditions that support the display of marental capacities, while for fathers this is mainly cultural. Through this he emphasises the central role of mothers, by asserting that 'paternal care is intrinsically less reliable and less integrated than motherhood' (Barudy y Dangtagnan, 2005, p.42), adding that *it is a merit to adopt a caring parental role as men, as they need to adopt a sensitivity towards their children* (emphasis added). Biological determinism is something explicit in the Barudy and Dangtangnan literature, perhaps influenced by Barudy's development as a psychiatrist and his attention to neuropsychological approaches, which are increasingly widespread in Chile. Discourses of masculinity and femininity and an essentialist construction of parenting roles seem to underpin Barudy and Dantagnan's conceptualisation, echoing an ethology perspective closely linked to attachment theory.

This framework has had a huge impact on the culture of CP in Chile, with many of these ideas being part of daily practices. A survey conducted by SENAME confirmed most teams were using the Barudy parenting guide to inform parenting assessment, with the concept of marental role becoming widespread and highly embedded and used as a model (SENAME, 2012). How this might influence practitioners' approaches to parenting roles is something which is explored in this thesis.

[13] Barudy, J. y Dangtanan, M. (2014) La inteligencia maternal: manual para apoyar la crianza bientratante y promover la resiliencia de padres y madres (The maternal intelligence: manual to support the good parenting and promote fathers and mothers' resilience) Madrid: Gedisa.

2.5. The overarching policy framework and its frameworks for practice

Within the broader context of policies, the overarching policy frame for SENAME and current general provisions for children and young people are outlined in the National Policy, 2015-2025 (Gob. Chile, 2016) designed under President Bachelet's government. This National Policy comprises universal and focussed policies. CP services are within the second (Andrade y Arancibia, 2010), being the most visible. This has resulted in stigmatisation derived from the approach of focussing the State's actions on children constructed in a state of 'vulnerable childhood' (Maldonado, 2014, Shöngrul-Grolmus, 2017). This reflects the tutelary role and the paternalistic approach, centred on poverty alleviation rather than rights' promotion as a universal policy.

One of the main criticisms by the Committee on the Rights of the Child pointed out since 2007 (Morlachetti, 2013), has been the lack of an integrated framework in children's policies, leading to fragmented and non-coordinated services, despite declared goals of inter-agency work. This is reflected in services spread across different government ministries (Staab, 2013, Morlachetti, 2013). In a national report that consulted the voices of practitioners, State commitment to a policy for children was perceived as weak, with practitioners and services team leaders sharing the view about Chile not having a policy on children at all (Contreras *et al*, 2014). This is significant as it sheds light on how weak the State is perceived in its commitment and must be analysed in the context of the historical shaping outlined here.

The literature on CP systems suggests that differences reflect the ways the State construct its responsibilities (narrow or broad), having implications for the design of policies and at the same time, cultural views about children and families (Lonne *et al* 2009, Parton, 2014, Muñoz, 2013, Schmid, 2011). When analysing the Chilean CP system in light of the models distinguished in this literature, it appears that Chile follows an Anglo-American model, which is the most common in developing countries, including Africa and LA (Schmid, 2011). In this model a CP discourse is salient, and the State's role is monitoring the compliance of parenting standards that places families as responsible. This is reflected in the current National Policy for children and adolescents, which has defined the State's role as guarantor of the entitlement of the children and adolescents' rights and by clearly outlining that:

> *the responsibility for care, protection, guidance and education is on the child's parents. The family is the main space for the development of children and adolescents, being understood*

that it is there that affection, stimulation and care is provided, regardless of their composition (Chilean government, 2016, p.65-66).

In this narrow and individualistic conceptualisation, the State is called to intervene in the family unity when it fails the rights of the children (2016, p.65). The role assigned to family fits within a neoliberal orientation of individual responsibility, but at the same with a familial approach that is identified as shaping services (Contreras *et al*., 2014, Muñoz y Aguirre-Pastén, 2012). This is reflected in the promotion of family ties, particularly within the CP sector, where there is a strong emphasis on a traditional perspective, with the dominance of kinship over alternative care such as adoption. This seems an historical trait, highly influenced by discourses about the primacy of the traditional family unit which became dominant in different periods, especially during the dictatorship, whose policies emphasised family values (Pinochet, 2017) and a patriarchal model (Thomas, 2016). This conflated with discourses of patriotism, placed women as mothers as central in the preservation of national moral values, highly associated with a Catholic tradition.

However, in current policies, these assumptions interact with institutional discourses that have been brought as a result of a modernisation of the State agenda, following the integration to the international community and its agreements. This is reflected in policies and particularly within public services. In the case of CP, specific frameworks for practices, which will be outlined below, reveal the inherent contradictions between these new institutional discourses and the underlying historical discourses that prevent change. Within them, the gender perspective and an intercultural perspective are playing a role in this thesis. They are detailed within this discussion of relevant policy frameworks.

While SENAME operates across the country through its regional offices, guidelines are developed centrally at the national office. These guidelines inform approaches for all programmes of intervention and must be integrated in this work. These approaches are underpinned by Chile's acquired commitment to international agreements' agendas subscribed since the return to democracy, especially UN requirements, such as the UNCRC. Such framework approaches are part of the National Policy for Children and adolescents and have been outlined as:

- Rights' approach. Related to conceptualising children as entitled to rights, according to the UNCRC.
- Human development approach. Related to the promotion of people's fulfilment of their capacities.

- Life development trajectories. Regarding the understanding of the different needs of children according to developmental stages.
- The gender approach.
- The intercultural approach.

As stated, the two latter approaches are relevant for this thesis, especially the gender approach and the impact it may have on interventions. The second is also relevant to discussion in view of ongoing issues regarding the relationship of the State with indigenous families, something visible in the CP area, where gender is also intersecting. As these approaches are relevant to understanding some of the practices explored in this study, they are discussed in the following pages for a better contextualisation and understanding of their underpinnings. Gender is developed more extensively to inform its current place as institutionalised in policy design and public services, with SENAME being part of this trend in the following section.

2.5.1. The gender approach and its institutionalization: the Chilean way

SENAME as a public organisation has integrated what is known in Chile as a 'gender perspective'. The requirement was introduced in 2002 by the Chilean government (Solar, 2009). As in the rest of LA, gender entered policy design, becoming mainstreamed across public services following the Fourth UN Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995, when it became a global policy paradigm promoted by UN (Payne, 2014, Waylen, 2016). In LA it has been inscribed within the modernisation of States agenda. Within the guidelines for SENAME it is conceptualised as:

> *The gender approach is aimed at the need to implement a policy based on rights that simultaneously considers gender equity and the rights of the boys, girls and adolescents* (Consejo Nacional de la Infancia/ National Council of Childhood, 2014 p.61).

It emphasises the need for services to incorporate mechanisms to address discrimination or inequality derived from stereotyped views according to perceived sex differences. In the case of SENAME, apart from some brief reports and basic general guidelines (see ACHNU, 2008), the most visible outcome is the production of descriptive statistics differentiated by sex, with a limited and narrow analysis on the impact that gender inequality represents. The focus is on understanding gender differences in children and young

people as service users, aimed at reducing discrimination, but with an invisibility of fathers and mothers regarding the reproduction of inequality in power distribution within families. To this date, there is no information on the impact, something needing exploration.

To understand the role of this 'gender perspective' in policy design, it is necessary to contextualise its integration and impact over the years. As said, it was mainly driven by external requirements, as a goal agreed at international level. However, it must be mentioned that gender equality had an internal driving force as it was part of the political demands within the fight against the dictatorship, where well remembered motto "democracy in the country and in the home" (Sepúlveda, 2013) made the emergent feminist movement an important area of political activism of the time. Subsequently, the introduction of the Beijing platform for gender quality was welcomed as crucial to capitalising on those demands, with some of those feminist activists becoming part of the State arrangements to implement it (Richards, 2004). These feminists, linked to political parties and, so-called *femocrats* (Valdés, 2010) were assuming positions within the new State machinery, however often tended to be eventually co-opted by the State bureocracy (Waylen, 1996) as criticised by independent feminists (Falquet, 2014, Pieper Mooney, 2009). Under what Tobar (2003) called the 'paradox of an unfinished transition to democracy', feminist demands disappeared during the nineties within the institutionalisation of the discourse of women's rights, that ended as subject to a process of compromise that silenced and marginalised key demands (Tobar, 2003). This compromise was part of a shadow deal that ensured a Chilean style of transition to democracy that actively avoided challenging traditional values in a highly conservative society. The result is gender equality becoming part of an institutional discourse that ended framed by international agencies within the Gender and Women framework, leaving behind, for instance, reproductive rights and other important feminist demands.

In practice, the incorporation of gender into public policies has implied the introduction of policy goals and measures as demanded by international agencies, reflected in the introduction of monitoring indicators (Debusscher, 2012). In Chile, monitoring tools of gender equality across services have, therefore, been integrated in a managerial way. Such is the Gender *PMG* (Programa de mejoramiento de la gestión, de Género/ Gender Programme of Management Improvement) across public services and provisions since 2002. This is a framework for public policies aimed at monitoring the integration of an analysis of the differentiated needs of men and women in different public provisions, which then must integrate such analysis into the provisions offered, to improve the focus of policies. (Solar, 2009).

At the macro level, positive gains have included legislation on domestic violence introduced in 1994 (Waylen, 2016) and the creation of SERNAM (National Service for Women) in 1991 as a government agency aimed at the promotion of women's rights (Thomas, 2016). From this service, the first tentative steps to addressing gender-based violence were taken, though significantly framed as intrafamily violence, according to legal conceptualisations. The establishment of womens'centres to support victims of domestic violence has been an outcome and more recently, the integration of still limited services for male perpetrators of violence. SERNAM has recently gained Ministry Status and been renamed the Ministry of Women and Gender equity (Thomas, 2016).

However, despite piecemeal progress, evidence suggests the translation of gender mainstreaming has been limited, showing many of the constraints linked to structural and cultural factors (Staab, 2010). In Chile, an assessment report commissioned by an NGO on the integration of the Gender perspective (Solar, 2009) found that gender mainstreaming is perceived as being forced without a full understanding of what it means. It has been meant to be adopted by main public services, yet it seems not fully integrated at the level of policy makers of central government agencies, the responsibles for the policy design, where the gender perspective has had less visibility.

2.5.2 The Bachelet legacy in gender equality and children's policies

As described, gender entered Chilean public policies, becoming institutionalised during the middle to late nineties. However, it became more visible with the two presidential periods of Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010 and 2014-2018, respectively), analysed as promoting the gender mainstreaming goals fulfilment (Thomas, 2016, Valdés, 2010). One of the main legacies has been the transformation of SERNAM into a Ministry, as explained above, providing the main framework for policies aimed at women.

Another remarkable legacy and, as part of children's policies is the *Chile Crece Contigo* (Chile Grows with you) scheme, which along with SENAME programmes is the most recognised in the country (Contreras *et al*., 2014). Launched in 2007, *Chile Crece Contigo* is a universal social protection policy. It targets children's development in conditions of socioeconomic deprivation in their early years. By providing focussed support entitling vulnerable families to universal and specific provisions (Cárcamo *et al*, 2014; Staab, 2012), it intends to address social disadvantage and inequality. Some scholars have found similarities with the Sure Start scheme developed in the UK (Cárcamo *et al*., 2014). *Chile Crece Contigo*, inscribed within a social capital investment paradigm, is celebrated as significant in social

protection policies (Staab, 2012). Based in the Ministry of Health it is informed by neuro and developmental psychology, more specifically by attachment theory, revealed in the emphasis given to the mother as central to children's development and outcomes.

However, one outcome is the inherent contradictions underlying this scheme. While aimed at addressing early development stages by focussing on children, the scheme includes free childcare provisions within a strategy to encourage women's engagement in paid work. In practice, participating in the programme has resulted in an aggregated burden for lone mothers, the main users, which results in disconnection with the broader macro-economic unequal context, hampering women's choices (Staab, 2010).

Also significant is the dominance of a professional expert discourse, which, while emphasising proper caring and rearing as a 'fundamental mother's role', seems to echo old assumptions regarding them as primary carers. As in the hygienistic movement of the medical discourse from 1912 onwards that later made room for the social work discourse, the dominant current shift is towards the psychology discourse, contributing to the essentialisation of motherhood. The Barudy framework of parenting has a significant place within this trend.

Although currently Chile Crece Contigo has shifted to encouraging involved fatherhood, evidence suggests that this has been slow (Aguayo y Sadler, 2011). What has become visible is the central place of women to initiatives aimed at children, reflecting gendered discourses. These are displayed within State machinery framed by gender equality international commitments since more than two decades ago, with contradictions becoming evident as it occurs with key state discourses placed within policy design. This is also the case of policies addressing the indigenous population as shown in the following section, regarding its place as a framework for practices.

2.5.3 The intercultural approach

Chile has a significant population of indigenous people. [14] Thus, there is the need to design policies that reflect this diversity in policy and practice. Linked also to international agreements, the 'intercultural approach' has been developed. This approach is evident in Chile signing the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 of the ILO[15] (International

[14] According to last national survey (CENSO, 2017, INE.) 12,8% of the total Chilean population recognise themselves as belonging to an indigenous group, which are Aymara, Mapuche and Diaguita, respectively.

[15] The 169 Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in independent countries is an international treaty passed in Geneva in 1989, ratified in Chile in 2008. This treaty establishes the duty of the State to engage in consultation with indigenous

Labour Organisation). Recently, in November 2017, a new framework has been introduced, which is the SENAME Policy on Aboriginal People (SENAME, 2017), which establishes an action plan to address the needs of indigenous children. It recognises the need to take all necessary measures to avoid any discrimination, by considering the cultural background in interventions developed. The document provides statistics showing that until 2016, the Mapuche[16] children accounted for the highest percentage of indigenous children in the CP system, concentrated in two of the southern regions.

The issues affecting Mapuche families and their contact with CP services emerge as relevant for this study, as the location selected for this research is within their ancestral territory. Something missing from the policy guidelines is the recognition of violence affecting Mapuche children and young people as a human rights concern for international agencies (UNICEF, 2016) and local human rights organisations (INDH, 2017). Over the last decade, state violence perpetrated by the police and intelligence services affecting mapuche families has been largely documented (Waldman, 2012) and subject to international research (Richards, 2013). Militarisation of the Mapuche territory, as part of the State's strategy to control and criminalise the Mapuche movement of lands reclaims has resulted in the so-called 'Mapuche conflict' (Richards, 2013). This issue has worsened historical tensions between the Chilean State and the Mapuche people, involving the legacies of colonial and early Republican arrangements, which involved Mapuche communities experiencing dispossession of their lands. These, violently taken by the State during late 1800 were transferred to Europeans settlers brought to establish Chile's domination over the Mapuche autonomous territory. Currently, neoliberal policies also shape the State's approach to these issues as they subordinate indigenous rights to corporate interests in the lands reclaimed, currently used for industrial purposes and profit by ruling elites who promote punitive measures. In this context, Mapuche children are victims of police violence in the context of raids, searches and proceedings involving the use of gas and bullets that are supported by the legal framework of an Antiterrorist Law introduced in the dictatorship era[17] (Waldman, 2012, Richards, 2013). The harm to children has been documented in the form of emotional damage impacting upon their mental health (Servicio de Salud Araucanía Norte, 2004) but also physical violence with

people on administrative and legal matters that may affect them. It also regulates issues related to traditional indigenous law and cultural practices (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, Gov. de Chile, 2018)

[16] Mapuche, meaning people of the land, are the most numerous group of the indigenous population of Chile, being 9, 9% of the Chile's total population (INE, 2015).

[17] This legal framework previously used to criminalise anti-dictatorship political organisations is now used against the uprisings of some mapuche organisations in the region, against recommendations of UN Human rights commissions (See Atallah, D (2016). 'Toward a decolonial turn in resilience thinking in disasters: Example of the mapuche from southern Chile on the frontiles and faultlines'. *International Journal of Disasters risk reduction*, 19, 92-100).

injuries treated in hospitals and even cases of young people murdered by the police [18]. Despite Court orders explicitly asking the police to take special caution when children and young people are involved the issue still remains in place, treated within a framework of national security that takes precedence over indigenous people's and children's rights. This places intervention with Mapuche families as particularly complex.

Regarding the involvement of SENAME with indigenous families, while making this issue visible, Mapuche scholars have criticised hegemonic discourses on childhood underpinning Chilean children's policies as the imposition of a Western perspective that subaltern and pathologise indigenous children and Mapuche child rearing practices (Millaleo, 2014). The official government discourse of multiculturalism has been accused of securing indigenous people's assimilation into the neoliberal project in Chile (Richards, 2010). Mapuche scholars have argued the internal colonialism that promotes an assimilationist monocultural model (Calfio, 2012) masked as multicultural but seeking to undermine indigenous identity (Rain, 2018).

Research is needed on this subject, as this has been pointed out as the outcome of the application of Western informed CP systems in contexts having indigenous populations in other contexts (Lonne *et al*, 2009). Given the issues described, this appears as another failure of a system in crisis and shaped by contradictory discourses.

Summary

This chapter has set the context of this research, outlining the main features and historical legacies of the CP system in Chile and its policy framework, resulting in the failings discussed. Regarding organisational aspects, the path followed by Chilean social policies in the post-dictatorship is both uneven and contradictory. While ascribing to international agreements and frameworks within the modernisation of the State paradigm, old features are pervasive coming into tension with these endeavours. This is the case with the children' rights approach adopted from the ratification of the UNCRC and at the same time the gender perspective coming from mainstreaming gender across public policies. The same could be said regarding the intercultural approach as on the one hand, full recognition of

[18] In 2017 the killing of a 17-year-old Mapuche was subject to public scrutiny. This adolescent had previously been taken to a SENAME residential programme of youth justice, criminalised under the Antiterrorist law in the context of the Mapuche struggles. He grew up with his community being harassed by the police from childhood (Figueroa, N. diario UChile, 2017). In 2018, another killing of a Mapuche young leader also involved a highly questioned detention and beating by the police of a 15-year-old boy who witnessed the incident (See https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/29/chile-camilo-catrillanca-death-four-police-officers-arrested

indigenous people is made explicit, but on the other, the same State implements punitive measures that violate adults and children's rights. Older discourses, with the mix of paternalism and authoritarianism characterise the Chilean State as legacies of its development, resulting in tension with these new paradigms.

The pervasiveness of historical legacies rooted in discourses where class and gender seem intertwined have consistently placed women as mothers at the centre of policies targetting children. Thus, it seems clear that gender has been historically an intervening force, with women constructed as instrumental to the State's goals. It is within this historical context that the research described in this thesis takes place. In chapter three a review of the relevant literature informing this research is set out.

CHAPTER THREE

Literature Review

Section I: The place of gender in CP: Why a gender lens?

3.1. Introduction

After setting the background for this research, this chapter reviews the literature available on the implication of gender in CP work. It is divided into two main sections. Section I reviews empirical studies identified in English speaking countries, which I labelled as international literature. This section starts with the identification of gender issues within the literature on practices in CP, as coming from research outcomes identified. Secondly, I develop three sections, organised according to salient themes identified within this literature. These are the gender patterning discernible in responses to the overlap between CP and domestic violence, constructions of men as fathers in services and other potential sources of bias in CP policy and practice.

Section II moves to the study context of LA and Chile by reviewing literature on the integration of gender into policy design, its visibility in State institutions and also in societal attitudes. A second section of this part outlines the main threads in gender studies in the region and key debates in relation to the arrival of gender conceptualisations to LA through the shaping of colonial processes, along with its concomitant impact in the shaping of gender relations and identity.

3.1.1. Literature review strategy

Before outlining the research strategy, it is important to establish a note of caution. As evident in this chapter, much of what has been written on the subject comes from social work research in the Global North or WEIRD countries. While recognising that scholarly literature in LA is not that comprehensive, one issue to raise is the invisibility of the scholarly literature produced in LA. Searches in well recognised databases only produced a limited number of these articles (45). Most of the LA sources had to be retrieved through local web pages as some journals are not electronically accessed. It should be noted that the politics of publication endorses the dominance of the English language, leading to a stark underrepresentation of LA scholars in the international community, an issue that has been documented (Mu and Pereyra, 2015). This is the problem Connell (2014, 2015) identified in the placing of the global North or Western knowledge as ‘recognised’ and readily available, a

point necessary to mention within a decolonial standpoint. An issue with relying only on Global North literature is the risk of lacking accuracy and cultural competency, something I have tried to address throughout my search.

To obtain both international and local literature, the search strategy involved two paths. First, searches were made through recognised bibliographic databases with keywords such as 'gender and child protection', 'parenting and child protection', 'gender and social work', and 'gender and discourses'. This provided an important number of peer-reviewed journal articles and the identification of relevant books. A second level was necessary to identify literature at a regional context and in my original language. For this literature, countering the problem of accessibility mentioned above, I followed a snowball technique by tracking references mentioned in sources accessed, such as international reports and policy analysis papers which had references to LA and Chilean sources not found through the databases search. In the review of literature process apart from the focus on gender issues in CP, masculinity, fatherhood and domestic violence studies were relevant as mentioned in some sources. Also, as research directly linked to CP and gender was more limited in LA, I decided to broaden the perspective out by including literature on policy analysis associated with gender, in the absence of more focussed literature on practices. As mentioned, the issue of culture being relevant for this study, in some sources regarding discussion on indigenous gender identity and relations are included as well as more theoretical literature to inform on gender construction.

I have built a corpus of literature in both languages, English and Spanish. For this study I have streamlined sources found according to:

- Empirical research with the implication of gender discussed (this is mainly in English).
- Literature on practices and organisational issues in CP.
- Literature on CP practices and institutional responses in Chile and LA.
- Literature on policy analysis of gender and children's policies in Chile.
- Literature on gender studies in LA.

In the research in LA I have selected what was directly linked to the construction of gender, and the outcomes of assessments on policy implementation, filtering according to the soundness of sources. I clarify that this particular path of building the literature, given the nature of this study, cannot fit within standardised procedures such as systematic reviews.

Many of the Latin American sources are difficult to track with such method, which may undermine my decolonial standpoint. Also, claims regarding the authority of systematic reviews have started to be contested given issues of representativeness (Dixon-Woods, 2016).

3.2. The study of CP practices and professional knowledge

As noticed by Scourfield (2003) and found in the literature identified here, gender is mentioned in the literature on social work, on policy analysis, in the domestic violence and feminist literature, but there is limited research on how gender is constructed. There is a resilience of more descriptive research on gendered practice with less on how this process occurs. Some studies describe the implications of gender as emerging from research outcomes. This is strongly concentrated within the study of practices, although some analysis of policies has also been included. This type of research, mainly qualitative and mixed methods, has shed light on the discursive nature of practices in social work, reflecting on the use of language and specific categories and conceptualisations that expose the main concerns and constructions played out (Hall *et al*., 1997, Hall, *et al*., 2006, Hall and Slembrouk, 2009, Pithouse, 1998, Pithouse and Atkinson, 1988). It has been within this growing literature that gender has been identified as key within such constructions. From this research, space for debates on practices and the need to understand and address how practitioners are developing their work has been developed. This has resulted in an increasing awareness of the nature of CP practices and the role of constructions in shaping routine procedures (Farmer and Owen, 1995, Parton *et al.*, 1997, Dingall *et al.*, 1995). This is the first finding relevant to draw upon in this thesis, the relevance of the study of practices to understand practitioners' constructions impacting their work.

Issues discussed within this literature have addressed the concerns and anxieties within practices. Significant is the claim regarding a shift from child welfare to a narrower CP framing in children's policies globally (Lonne *et al.*, 2009, Parton, 2014, 1991, Jack, 1997). This framing has been described by an emphasis on the use of categories within increasingly managerial risk assessment approaches. Some have dubbed it the forensic gaze (Jack, 1997, Donzelot, 1980, Parton *et al.*, 1997) and linked it to a language that White (1998) describes as psycho-legal, the socio-legal discourse (Parton, 1991). This language and its underpinnings have been central in the trend towards categorisation, as a distinguishable feature of CP, a factor further developed in the following section. Some have claimed the existence of a CP discourse (Jack, 1997, Parton 1991, Parton *et al.*, 1997, Scourfield, 2003,

Walsh, 2010). Within its focus on risk and failure, the main site of categorisation has been around parenting practices (Parton *et al*, 1997, Hall *et al*. 2006).

3.2.1. Categorisation as discourse

Parton *et al*, (1997) claim that categorisation is integral to CP. The use of categories as a specific language distinguishable within this organisational culture has been one of the areas analysed (Hall *et al*, 2006, Harlow and Hearn, 1995) as ingrained in CP culture in the use of technical language reflected in labels or conceptualisations.

Parton *et al.*, (1997) understand this as part of the practitioners' need to make interpretations and, therefore sense of the circumstances they examine. The use of categories comes into play in CP culture, within the teams in what Pithouse and Atkinson (1988) called 'case-talk'. In this sense-making process, specific aspects of the organisational culture are involved in pushing towards the search for patterns in cases (Platt and Turney, 2014) while integrating key aspects of the wider culture such as childrearing practices. Categorisation has been linked to moral assessment. In this vein, Parton *et al.*, (1997, p.89) have argued that the characteristic of CP work in their contact with parents is 'risk assessment as a moral enterprise'. Keddell (2011) in research in CP in New Zealand found this is an integral part of the reasoning in decision-making processes, where specific constructions regarding children needs and families are displayed.

Along with the identification of categorisation and moral assessment in the scrutiny of parents (Taylor and White, 2006), research has identified this judgment as not always evidence-informed and prone to bias (Munro, 2011). For instance, in the UK 'confirmation biases' are cited factors impacting on decision making (Munro, 2008). These biases have been found as cognitive processes misleading practitioners in their search for evidence matching patterns expected (Spratt *et al*., 2015, Platt and Turney, 2014). Campbell *et al.*, (2015) found evidence of biases consisting in practitioners relying on types of knowledge that ended in the prevention of fathers' engagement. A quantitative cross-country study of 828 practitioners' attitudes towards child removal (Benbenishty *et al*, 2015) found that personal beliefs were highly influential in practitioners' decisions. These beliefs acted like scripts in search of confirmation (Spratt *et al*, 2015). Regarding the building of these beliefs, there seems to be a process by which assumptions become shared (Parton *et al*, 1997). Scourfield and Pithouse (2006b) have argued there is an interaction between lay and professional knowledge, with practitioners bringing shared 'common sense' assumptions to their reasoning.

Part of the constructions where biases have been found are influenced by gender. For instance, it has been claimed that the category of child abuse is a social construction (Parton *et al*, 1997, Azzopardi *et al*, 2017) and that neglect is constructed as a mother's failure (Swift, 1995, Daniel and Taylor, 1999, Turney, 2000). More recently, Azzopardi e*t al.* (2017), have made the case for the gendered construction of the category of child abuse as reflected in theoretical explanations provided. The review that follows explores how gender bias emerges as visible in CP and welfare in the research available.

3.3. Gender patterning in CP: building a case

Some researchers have claimed that CP discourse is gendered (Scourfield, 2003, Farmer and Owen, 1998, Daniel and Taylor, 1999, Azzopardi, 2015). It has been argued this genderered patterning has remained invisible as definitions of child abuse and neglect do not recognise the gender issues underpinning such categories (Swift, 1995, Turney, 2000, Daniel and Taylor, 2006).

This type of critique was used to argue against the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* policy in England (Daniel *et al.*, 2005). These critiques, while exposing the lack of gender analysis and the policy failures to address the differing positions of men and women in parenting, explicitly called for a gender lens to be mainstreamed in child welfare (Daniel *et al.*, 2005). The main point was the gendered nature of parenting. Acknowledging gender as relevant in this area emerged post 1990's, driven by a body of evidence coming from research on policy and practice, mainly in social work. While gender was not the main thrust within these enquiries, it was identified as important within the emerging findings.

In the USA Gordon (1989) identified discourses across an extended period dating from 1880 to 1960. This work has influenced research on historical exploration in the area. Her research, with a focus on domestic violence, revealed the negotiations that occurred between practitioners and service users, making visible the differing positions of men and women as pointed out by Daniel *et al.* (2005). The findings, from the analysis of case files, suggested oppressive practices over decades, which put a focus on women facing violence, while not scrutinising men.

In the UK context, a study of practices commissioned by the Department of Health (Farmer and Owen, 1995) also arrived at conclusions regarding the implication of gender, although this was not the primary focus of the research. This study examined the different stages of the CP process. In a paper that documented part of that study, the authors highlight that gender affects the operation of the system, as a result of being absent from the debates

(Farmer and Owen, 1998). The need to examine how gender affects the operation of the CP system at each stage was emphasised, where the differential treatment of mothers and fathers was identified as a clear bias, calling for a change in practitioners' interventions (Farmer and Owen, 1998). A finding was what they called the 'deflection away from abusive men to the focus on mothers', and the invisibility of men's violence and power imbalances in child rearing. They noted how emergent feminist literature on 'mother blaming discourse' was largely overlooked at the time.

Swift's (1995), well-recognised qualitative and critical study on the Canadian child welfare system explored how neglect is a construction highly gendered with the outcome of 'manufacturing bad mothers'. By analysing case files, she found that cases of neglect were socially constructed and reproduced through practices. Gender was implicated in the ways accounts never included fathers, regardless of them being at home or not. The focus of practitioners was consistently on the performance of mothers, assessed in their parenting through ideological normative standards of affection materialised as expectations. Beyond this, it was noted that these standards were heavily applied to aboriginal families, who were among 50% of the sample, a relevant finding for the context of my research. More contemporary research has found a consistent overrepresentation of ethnic or racial minorities and indigenous families in CP in countries with indigenous populations, as in the cases of Australia, New Zealand and Canada (Dominelli *et al.* 2011, Stokes and Schmid, 2011, Lonne *et al*, 2009, Nadan *et al.*, 2015), which echoes Swift's critical analysis of assimilationist and colonialist practices, as another source of bias.

Within the research examining practices, at the end of the nineties, Parton *et al.* (1997) used a mixed methods analysis in a study of the Australian CP system. This research shed light on how moral judgment was involved in the operationalisation of risk assessment frameworks. Gender emerged in the focus on maternal identity displayed through the assessment of maternal behaviour. In this research, through the analysis of case files, the construction of expectations about parenting embodied in mothers was evident. They were assessed in relation to decisions on risk and their protectiveness, as part of the decision-making process. Men's use of violence, while mostly invisibilised was one of the issues identified along with the gendered division of parenting as the underlying causes for referrals.

I mention these studies as, being from different contexts, and apart from Swift, not exploring gender specifically; they arrived at similar findings regarding how noticeable gender bias was operating. Since then, there has been an increasing body of literature that while not explicitly aimed at exploring gender, has discussed it as a bias. Highly influential

on following research has been Scourfield's (1999, 2003) qualitative study of a social work team in Wales. His analysis focussed on the 'occupational culture' of CP to describe the embeddedness of constructions underpinning gendered practice. The ethnographic approach, based on a review of case files, in-depth interviews with social workers and observations identified patterns of discourses related to the construction of women and men as clients that focus on the centrality of mothering, despite the availability of feminist thinking within the team (2001, p.80). Scourfield highlights the complex nature of emergent discourses about women as having a mixture of positive and negative perceptions from social workers, where the interplay of patriarchal and feminist discourses influences the exclusion of men and the focus on mothers.

Another relatively recent study is Azzopardi's (2015) research on the discursive construction of failure to protect as a gendered discourse in child abuse cases in the Canadian child welfare system. One of the main findings is that theories of child abuse have been central in fueling the discourse of failure to protect, adding to evidence of approaches not being gender neutral, but interacting with societal normative discourses, a key argument that I want to explore in this thesis. In this vein, Azzopardi (2015) notes that while both parents can be accused of failure to protect, fathers are rarely held accountable. This reveals the gendered nature of assumptions on parenting permeating CP practices. This was also documented by a cross-country content analysis study of 13 publications (Humphreys and Absler, 2011). The study, including contexts such as Canada, Australia, the USA and the UK identified a common pattern of mother-blaming discourse. As this study included Gordon' study (1989) the authors argue 'repeating patterns for more than a century' (Humphreys and Absler, 2011, p.469) of the 'failure to protect' narrative when violence is involved. This has consistently been identified. For instance, in Strega *et al*, (2008), a study of fathers in CP in Canada. It was also described earlier by Gordon (1989), Swift (1995), and found by Lapierre' study (2010a) with mothers in the UK.

3.4. CP concerns and domestic violence: fragmented approaches

The issue of domestic violence is an area where gender has been identified as playing a key role as identified by feminist research since the 1970's. Regarding CP, this area has been a site where issues linked to the safeguarding of children have consistently been found (Mullender *et al.*, 2002) and where the influence of practitioners' constructions appear relevant. Given the complexities and the well documented impact domestic violence has on the physical and psychological well-being of children (Mullender *et al*, 2002, Hester *et al*.,

2007, Harne, 2011), domestic violence started to be more visible within CP with a increasing body of research revealing its impact upon women and children (see Radford and Hester, 2006, Mullender *et al.*, 2002, Humphreys and Stanley, 2006). Currently, the association of children maltreatment's and domestic violence has been well documented as overlapping (Hester and Radford, 1996, Mullender *et al*, 2002, Stanley and Humphreys, 2015, Friend, Shlonsky and Lambert, 2008, Banks *et al*, 2009, Postmus and Merrit, 2010, Turner *et al*, 2015), an analysis overlooked for many years.

Evidence, coming mainly from qualitative studies documenting women's experiences sheds light on the impact of violence on mothering (Brown, 2006, Radford and Hester, 2006, Douglas and Walsh, 2010, Lapierre, 2010a, Wendt, Buchanan and Moulding, 2015). One key finding is practitioners' use of protectiveness as a recurrent narrative to assess mothers' responses to children's needs of safeguarding in CP services (Wendt, Buchanan and Moulding, 2015). For instance, it was documented by Douglas and Walsh, (2010), in research with women in Australia, that in many cases interventions end with mothers being given ultimatums. Lapierre (2008), described the 'deficit model of mothering' as a construction underpinning the scholarly literature on domestic violence that, while focusing on the effects on children, constructs mothering as central. The focus on deficiencies and failures had led to a discourse of mothers as failing while ignoring men's violence, which is reflected in policy and practices, as research has revealed (Humphreys and Absler, 2011). Lapierre (2010a, 2010b) in participatory research with 26 women in England documented the challenges faced by mothers in the aftermath of domestic violence, with standards of 'good mothers' used to assess mothering under the demand of 'putting children first'. This resulted in increased pressure under violent male domination tacticts to undermine mothering. Morris (2009) has named this process "maternal alienation"[19], seen in the context of an "abusive household gender regime" that is also reproduced in professional responses. Similar findings regarding the adscription to hegemonic "good mother' narratives were found in research in Australia, but this time in men's accounts, as a tactic of coercive control and attacks on mothering (Heward-Belle, 2017), an issue previously identified by Radford and Hester (2006). These studies shed light on ongoing issues regarding the impact of violence on mothers and mothering and the ideological underpinnings their practice.

[19] Maternal alienation here is employed to analyse the undermining of mothering that occurs as a result of domestic violence, usually in the context of child contact. It is not related to the 'parental alienation syndrome' found in the literature (Gardner, 1987) associated with the colluding of a parent with the child against the other parent, an idea that is still subject to debate (see Lapierre, S. and Côté, I. (2016) Abused women and the threat of parental alienation: shelters workers' perspectives. Child and Youth Services Review 65, pp.120-126.)

One key finding has been the lack of integrated responses and the scrutiny and blame women feel when in contact with CP services (see Brown, 2006; Lapierre, 2010a; Wendt, Buchanan and Moulding, 2015). Regarding gender bias, Humphrey's research (1998) described a pattern between 'avoidance and confrontation' and even minimisation in cases referred to CP, involving domestic violence. As this study included Asian and black families, a relevant finding was how culture appeared salient within the approaches taken, including racial discrimination and oppressive approaches making the experiences for these families harsher than for white families. This is an issue mentioned in other studies (Chantler and Gangoli, 2011), more increasingly gaining visibility, yet confined to research conducted in WEIRD countries, where evidence is mostly produced.

3.4.1. Fragmented practice: the three planets

Regarding the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment, Radford and Hester (2006) noticed that fragmentation occurred as the two issues have developed separately within narrow perspectives, blind to the abusive social relations that undermine mothering. This blindness may be related to gender bias and the organisational cultures of practitioners.

One key issue noticed is the fragmentation of services across the CP and domestic violence areas. This does not appear as a unique trend of a specific system, but a problem found across different countries. Evidence is found in studies in the USA and Canada (Friend, Shlonsky and Lambert, 2008, Banks *et al*, 2009), Australia (Douglas and Walsh, 2010) and the UK and some European countries (Hester, 2010). Douglas and Walsh (2010), following a study with practitioners' understandings, used the metaphor of 'the great divide' across services. Hester (2011), drawing on evidence from the UK has explained this fragmentation under the three planets model. The three planets identified as CP, domestic violence and child contact services are described as failing to produce integrated responses by remaining rigidly attached and constrained within their own organisational frameworks. The result is failing to understand and address the dynamics of protecting children and women living with domestic violence.

Central to this identified problem is the place of gender in the conceptualisation of domestic and interpersonal violence. As such, it is not only related to the divide between services and policies but closely linked to theoretical underpinnings informing conceptualisations (Hanson and Patel, 2014). Some attempts have been made to address this gap, and current research has recently shifted to action research such as interagency

training[20]. For example, Laing *et al* (2018) in research on practitioners' voices regarding interagency collaboration, found that discourses on violence underpinning practices were the biggest gap between CP, domestic violence and family law system in Australia.

The key trend in this research is that practitioners' understandings are fundamental in unpacking gendered constructions reflected in practices.

Regarding professional understandings, this is reflected in conceptual debates on domestic violence. While mainstream sociology has promoted constructions of 'family violence' as 'mutual combat' (Strauss, 2005, Gelles 1997), psychological approaches emphasise dysfunctional dynamics and intergenerational cycles of violence (Ansen and Fonagy, 2017) or psychopathological individual traits (Dutton and Bodnarchuck, 2005). These approaches duly influence responses. A feminist critique of these approaches highlights the unequal power and the gendered nature of interpersonal violence underpinned by gender asymmetry with male violence used against women and children (Dobash and Dobash, 1998, Stark, 2010, Yllo, 2005, Harne, 2011). In turn, Hearn (2012) following his study with male perpetrators (Hearn, 1998) argues that enough evidence is available on domestic violence assuming a gendered nature, with men overwhelmingly positioned as perpetrators of harm affecting women and children. As made clear, a central issue of debate is how gender is implicated in such conceptualisations, which is reflected in institutional responses, as highlighted by Hester (2010, 2011).

3.5. Whose voices? Critiques of the feminist standpoint

Research exists claiming that domestic violence has been discursively constructed and monopolised by feminists (Strauss, 2005). Assuming these feminist perspectives privilege women's voices over men's, they have questioned constructions of men's violence as a risk in their fathering (Featherstone and Trinder, 1997). For instance, Hester and Radford's study on child contact (1996) was criticised for not considering the perspectives of men (Featherstone and Trinder, 1997). However, although still limited, there is a body of research conducted with men (Hearn, 1998, Dobash and Dobash, 1998, Harne, 2011, Kelly and Westmarland, 2016). Recently in the UK, the Mirabal project (see Alderson, Kelly and Westmarland, 2015 and 2016), a multi-method programme research looking at domestic

[20] A trend in interagency research is identified. This in some cases has followed an evidence-based approach aimed at improving the professionals' response involved in the overlap of domestic violence and child protection (see Turner *et al*, 2015, Szilassy *et al*, 2013), with initiatives in the UK, and Australia (Healey, *et al*., 2018). While promising outcomes have been found, there is still the issue of the embeddedness of attitudes and their changes in the longer term. Ingrained beliefs and organisational cultures may still influence the maintenance of training results (Szilassy *et al*, 2013).

violence perpetrators programmes has documented men's voices. Preliminary findings confirm Dobash and Dobash (1998) and Hearn (1998) previous studies on patterns of the minimisation of violence that men construct as 'incidents'. Contrary to this framing, research has revealed a consistent pattern of men using violence to assert masculinity and demonstrate power over women (Hearn, 2012), which supports Stark's (2007) conceptualisation of coercive control. Developing this, Harne (2011) following research on fathers as perpetrators of domestic violence has pointed out the harm that violent fathering does to children, whilst rejecting the construction of family violence as mutual. Evidence suggests in her study that fathers are the ones posing the highest risk to children. Yet, policies maintain a status-quo of double gendered standard of parenting that blames abused mothers and fails to scrutiny men (Harne, p.169). In tackling this, Hester (2012) has emphasised the need to integrate a gender analysis to show how normative constructions of masculinity and femininity impact upon services and judicial responses.

Following a study comparing patterns of incidents reported to the police by men and women, Hester (2013) provided evidence that men were consistently found as perpetrating more incidents over time, and in general, with more severity than the violent episodes perpetrated by women, who were found in many cases as having some mental health or health issues. In a recent study, the largest of a European survey with a male clinical population (Hester *et al.*, 2017), men's reporting experiences of coercive control, when considering impact, reached 4.4%, significantly lower than women. What seems consistent is that violence is mostly perpetrated by men, impacting upon women and children, and not always appropriately addressed by services, influenced by gendered constructions that overlook the asymmetry involved. What can be drawn from this area in relation to CP practice is that understandings linked to patterns of domestic or interpersonal violence are a site for gender bias.

3.5.1. Violence in post-separation and child contact scenarios

A highly gendered discourse has been identified as influencing frameworks for practice in the dynamics of post-separation, where violence is identified (see Trinder *et al*, 2009, Humphreys and Thiara, 2003, Radford and Hester, 2015, Thiara and Humphreys, 2017).

For example, Stanley *et al.* (2009) documented 50% of referrals to CP following police intervention in post-separation violence scenarios in the UK. Hester and Radford's (1996) study of child contact documented the contradictions emerging from child contact

arrangements where the violence of former male partners was invisible to the legal practitioners that favoured child contact over risks posed to children and women. Erikson and Hester (2001) on a comparison of the UK and Swedish in post-separation policy and practice, noted how the 'ungendered' framings in both countries lacked a focus on the link between men's violence and fatherhood, with the risk associated. This issue has remained as a concern over the years (Harne, 2011). Humphreys and Thiara (2003) found that 76% of a sample of women in post-separation scenarios experienced violence from former partners, with risks posed to their children with ambiguous legal responses being found. Later, these same researchers conceptualised the phenomenon of the *absent presence* (Thiara and Humphreys, 2017) of the abusive father to analyse the continuous impact of abusive tactics through child contact, with experiences of distress that remain highly invisible for practitioners. This study considered mothers's and children's experiences. This is important if part of the professional interaction is to push for women to end violent relationships.

Regarding the enactment of discourses across practitioners, research on child contact and children's voices conducted by Mcdonald (2010) used Cafcass reports in cases of domestic violence. This study, using a discourse analysis method, found that prevailing ideologies about the family and the nature of domestic violence impacted on recommendations made regarding contact. Practitioners' constructions of cases revealed the power of discourses that can even undermine concerns about risks posed to children, where heteronormative and gendered socio-legal discourses of pro-contact with non-resident fathers are played out (MacDonald, 2017). Furthermore, as Radford and Hester (2015, p.114) explain a 'double disapperance act' operates by which the needs and rights of children get overlooked by police, CP and the family courts, to then move to frame issues of domestic violence as other general problems, such as parenting.

Given this evidence, post-separation emerges as a context where discourses are reflected in responses to violence involving parents and children as it was visible in the conceptualisation of the three planets model (Hester, 2011). The issue of perpetrator fathers keeping violence and control through child contact arrangements has emerged from this trend as something to address.

What can be concluded is the link between CP concerns and domestic violence seem to be well established (Humphreys and Absler, 2011, Gordon, 1989). However, the implication of gender bias has involved significant controversy. It is important to consider how professional approaches are shaped by how violence is conceptualised and tackled, which underpins the problem of fragmentation, especially regarding the support that is

provided, and who are identified as the victims and the perpetrators. These controversies also involve constructions of fatherhood and their impact on children, which is examined in a section below.

3.5.2. The invisibility of men

The gender bias identified so far becomes reflected in the focus on mothering, with this being central to theories of child abuse (Azzopardi *et al*., 2017). Within developmental approaches the widely accepted maternal deprivation explanations have linked attachment theory to the examination of mothering (Keddell, 2011, Daniel and Taylor, 1999, Smith *et al.*, 2017). This has underpinned policies promoting an *intensive mothering ideology* as documented in Canada and the USA (Butler, 2010, Hays, 1996) as well as practices in the UK (Lapierre, 2010). Despite recent trends in challenging attachment theory (Franzblau, 2002, Keller, 2013, Vicedo, 2017) one consequence of its dominance is the consistent evidence of men as fathers becoming invisible in CP and welfare practices, compared to the presence and focus on women. This has been identified across countries (Farmer and Owen, 1995, D' Cruz, 2003, Swift, 1995, Daniel and Taylor, 1999, Strega *et al,* 2008, Scourfield, 2003, Brown *et al.* 2009, Campbell, *et al.* 2015, Amato, 2018). For instance, Strega *et al* (2008) mixed methods study in Canada revealed how mother blaming was associated with father absence. In this study based on a review of 116 case files, a consistent pattern was the absence of references to fathers in the records, considered irrelevant in 50% of the sample and with 60% of them identified as representing risks, yet not being contacted. Resulting from this, Brown *et al*. (2009) have discussed the process of 'manufacturing ghost fathers' as found in policy and practice. After this finding, Dominelli *et al* (2011) suggested a gap in current research regarding the experiences of fathers. They intended to address it by integrating a narrative approach interviewing 11 fathers in the context of the larger study already cited (Strega *et al*., 2008, Brown *et al*, 2009). The aim was replicated by Zanoni *et al.* (2014) conducting a mixed methods study with 34 fathers in Australia. Recently, Amato (2018) in a literature review of evidence suggests that research is needed to explore the possible 'systemic male gender bias' in the child welfare system. These studies criticise the unfair treatment of fathers and their depictions as uncommitted and uninvolved.

A body of research has analysed why men appear in this way within practice files. There is a suggestion that due to constructions of men as perpetrators, practitioners fear to challenge them (Daniel and Taylor 1999) and therefore they collude with these men by focusing on the parent who is present. Secondly, the persistence of the breadwinners' regime

places men as full-time employed providers, who are then presented as legitimately lacking availability (Daniel and Taylor, 1999). Scourfield (2003) summarises perceptions he identified as predominantly negative, with men regarded as irrelevant, as a threat, as absent, as no different to women, and better than women only when women are constructed as bad mothers (Scourfield, 2003).

While the gender bias explanation is key to understanding how men are excluded and sidelined, a reflection that constructs them as victims of the system overlooks that more often this invisibility is linked to unaccountability and that the invisibility of men has resulted from a bias that impacts more harshly upon women.

As said, the invisibility of men seems to lead to unaccountability. This was clear in the study by Farmer and Owen (1995) on what they called the process of 'deflection away' from men as perpetrators of violence to focus on the mother. Similar pattern of responsibility of mothers and invisibility of fathers were found by D'Cruz (2002) in Australia (2002) while Mulkeen's (2012) analysis of CP protection practices in Ireland makes a case for the erosion of men's accountability in situations of violence and child abuse.

Regarding the invisibility of men, Stanley (1997) has argued that practitioners end up adhering to gender stereotyping when allocating women with the responsibility for controlling men's violence while naturalising it as part of lack of self-control, an assumption that does not appear for the assessment of women's behaviour.

In summary, research in different countries shows men have remained highly invisible in CP policy and practice. For example, Scourfield (2003) has noted that the skills needed to involve them are not constructed as central in CP work and that social workers tend to avoid challenging perceived gender orders, despite some awareness of their presence (Scourfield, 2006). In a survey with practitioners, it is concluded that research is still limited and needs to understand what works for whom (Scourfield *et al*, 2014). This would be a specific issue to explore in future research with fathers, as the evidence remains limited. In the important issue of engagement with services, on a recent study on the engagement of fathers in parenting courses in the UK, Symonds (2015) found evidence of the gendered approach used by the practitioners in their initial calls to invite parents referred to these services. Traditional views of the family were found in this study as dominant where parenthood is conflated with motherhood. According to this assumption, mothers were successfully more recruited than fathers, which is the general trend observed in CP and welfare (Campbell *et al.*, 2015).

3.5.3. Fatherhood critique

In line with claims of men as victims of bias, a relatively recent trend in research that challenges feminist research focussing on mothers is fatherhood studies, mainly developed within developmental psychology and more recently sociology. Apart from some recognised pieces of work (see Lewes and Lamb, 2007, Lamb, 2010) research with fathers is still limited, compared to research on mothers (Featherstone, 2006).

Fatherhood studies claim this role as relevant for children's development (Featherstone, 2006; Campbell *et al*, 2015) criticising stereotyped views that portray them as a risk. Featherstone (2003), consistent with her critique of the misrepresentation of fathers in feminist perspectives, has made the point of fathers as potential resources for children, demanding to 'take fathers seriously' (2003). The idea that 'fathers matter' (Featherstone, 2006, Campbell *et al.*, 2015) gained recognition in the UK under the New Labour period (1997-2010), with policies that intended to influence public attitudes (Scourfield and Drakeford, 2002). Recently, approaches called 'fathers as resource' have been developed to work with men that have been perpetrators of violence, yet, evidence of positive outcomes of these initiatives is still limited (Blacklock and Phillips, 2015).

One emergent issue within studies on fatherhood is the division of labour and parenting. In this vein, Dermott and Miller (2015) challenge feminist assertions that gender relations and parenting remain unchanged, with more involvement and the patterns of transformation of fatherhood seen over the last decades, something they suggest is underestimated. However, others suggest that despite apparent changes, the main issue that remains as an underlying source of unequal distribution of parenting is the division of labour, with much of the breadwinners' model persisting as well as the gender norms underpinning it (Gillies, 2003). Gregory and Milner (2011), in research comparing the UK and France regarding fatherhood regimes and public discourses, conclude that although some changes have taken place, they remain fragmented and uneven.

3.5.4. Cultural competency in research with fathers

One issue identified with the fatherhood literature is the lack of in-depth cultural analysis as research has focussed mainly on white men (Harne, 2011) in Western contexts. In a review of research, Lewes and Lamb (1997) claim that a successful father is one whose role matches the expectations and norms within his socio-cultural and familial context. This seemed a call to consider cultural contexts in the analysis of fatherhood. In an attempt to inform the issue, Milner and Maiter (2008) conducted a comprehensive literature review of

research on fatherhood in different cultures, including Latino migrants, African-Americans and Caribbean in the USA. They concluded that contextual knowledge is needed to understand the diverse and fluid nature of fatherhood, which occurs in the intersection of different identities. This is not confined to culture or ethnicity but goes beyond to include race, economic status, religion, etc., as factors to be situated within the context of racial politics and a history of colonisation. Although not explicitly argued, this may be a call for an intersectional analysis, relevant to consideration for this research and the need for a culturally situated lens, given the context of studying Chile. The need for cultural analysis has been highlighted further even in contexts with more progressive frameworks, such as Findland (Vuori, 200), where father-friendly policies are in place. However, as research suggests, ultimately gendered parenting discourses still shape social practices as influenced by cultural constructions (Vuori, 2009).

In a review of factors involved in fathers' engagement, Gordon *et al*, (2012) provide support for the cultural and social context of fathers as something to consider. In the same vein, research conducted with working-class parents in the UK (Dolan, 2014, Gillies, 2009) reveals how class position intersected with gender in the construction of fathering and masculine identities. The social and cultural context appears in this qualitative research impacting on the display of fathering practices. In relation to gendered identities shaped by class, this suggests that engagement must be situated, noting that the cultural aspect is only marginally mentioned in research, with an invisibility of fathers and their differences in class and race as part of their identities (Featherstone, 1997, Gillies, 2009). For example, Brown *et al*. (2009) found gender bias intertwined with class as reproducing Western, middle-class values and racial bias against ethnic groups, with the result of amplifying the lack of engagement of fathers.

What these different trends in research suggest is the pervasiveness of gendered constructions as a source of bias in approaches to mothers and fathers. In addition, in contexts where other sources of identity are salient, such as class and ethnicity, this bias is further amplified.

Overall, there is evidence to suggest that gender is implicated in CP work representing a bias that reproduces societal normative constructions of parenting by placing women as the focus of scrutiny and leaving men invisible (Dominelli *et al*, 2011). By means of summary, Humphreys (2010, p.509) outlines the key problems identified:

- Failure to address the situation of women living with domestic violence in CP services.

- Holding women responsible and especially drawing on social divisions in cases of lone mothers and indigenous women.
- Failure to understand post-separation violence.
- Sidelining men by not placing them as accountable for failing to protect their children and not expecting much of them.
- Evidence of patriarchal patterns in the family reproduced in state interventions with women, with lack of sensitive approaches.

Summary

This review of the international literature involves studies conducted mainly in Canada, the UK, Australia, and to a lesser extent, the USA. Despite variations in these CP systems, from broader models framed as child welfare, like Canada to more CP focus as in the UK, for instance, there are points that reflect common features and concerns. These commonalities seem robust in several elements, informed by different types of research. Although I know there has been research considering the voices of children,[21] I do not cover that in this review as the focus is the construction of gender regarding parents and the discourses found in professional practices. Key findings from this part of the literature review that provides a context to situate this research are:

- The role of discourses in shaping professional understandings and their enactment in practices. These discourses reflect theoretical underpinnings that are not neutral but reflecting societal assumptions, particularly in the constructions of femininity and masculinity, with a normative mothering ideology permeating the responses.
- Gender bias in professional responses and policy design that while focusing on mothers and their protectiveness fail to engage fathers or men in general linked to their invisibility and unaccountability when violence is involved.
- The interconnectedness of CP issues and domestic violence and the problem of the fragmentation of responses in policy, practice and judicial responses. Post- separation scenarios seem an area where research has started and where more research is needed in its dynamics.
- The lack of cultural analysis and less visibility of the issues faced by ethnic or minority communities in countries where this is relevant.

[21] Research on children's voices has explored the impact of domestic violence, documenting the need for better responses. For instance, Mullender *et al.*, (2002), Hester *et al*, (2007), Stanley and Humpreys (2015).

This evidence comes from Western dominated contexts and paradigms of CP. The cultural dimension, although assumed as implicit in the conceptualisation of discourses as socially constructed, is not explicitely examined as part of the analysis of how discourses are played out. Although the issue of biased assimilationist approaches reflecting within institutionalised colonialism and racism has been analysed in some research, particularly in the case of Canadian studies (Swift, 1995, Brown *et al*., 2009) and feminist research in the UK (Humphreys, 1998, Chantler and Gangoli, 2011) this is not commonly reflected in contexts where an interplay of cultures occurs. When culture is considered it is seen as a feature of other ethnic groups, 'racialised others' (Brown *et al*., 2009, p.31). A key issue to consider is the clash with Anglophone models of CP informed by Western values, needing an exploration in a more diverse context. This appears particularly relevant to illuminate findings of this thesis, as the involvement of indigenous families in the CP system is discussed.

Taking the evidence reviewed here, I argue that culture is an aspect that cannot be left out in research in LA, which is what follows in the second section of this chapter. Culture is linked to historical factors that operate in the wider culture, having a dialectic relationship with micro-cultures in organisations and social institutions as well as individuals, something that was somehow outlined in chapter two for the case of Chile. As it will be discussed in the next section my claim is that *culture matters*.

Section II: The place of gender in cultural constructions in LA

3.6. Introduction

In the case of LA and Chile, empirical evidence is limited, compared to the picture at international level presented in the previous section. Empirical studies are mainly reports commissioned by the international agencies that have policy agendas in LA, inscribed within Development studies. These are, for example, the UN Economic Commission for the Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC or CEPAL in Spanish), The United Nations Program for Development (UNDP or PNUD in Spanish), World Bank and UNICEF. These organisations have conducted assessments of policy design on specific topics, particularly framed within development and the modernisation of LA, where gender was integrated. Thus, this review aimed at informing what is known on the implications of gender in policy and practice in Chile moves from policy analysis and the main conclusions of international reports to local research on cultural constructions and and gender studies and historiography of gender,

limited research on practices and institutional responses to a more conceptual literature that offers a picture of the context regarding the place of gender identity and relations.

3.6.1. Gender in policy analysis

In LA, gender has been more visible in policy as part of the Gender and Development (GAD), framework, described by Radcliffe *et al.* (2003) as the *transnationalisation* of gender. This is the outcome of the mainstreaming of gender described in chapter two. Evidence produced by international agencies has provided information on how gender is reflected in social practices, offering clues on the type of dominant gender constructions preventing gender equality commitments. These have been observed through different measures and methods employed by the authors of these reports, such as surveys, interviews, and documentary analysis. The UNDP (PNUD, 2010) assessment report on gender equality, for example, by using quantitative data, reported that Chile was at the time of the assessment the second country in LA with the lowest rate of female engagement in paid work. This finding is relevant, given the increase in structural provisions to support women's labour participation, such as the introduction of childcare facilities (UNDP/PNUD, 2010). Quantitative research on attitudes has found cultural constructions of women's role as an underlying factor in Chile (Contreras and Plaza, 2010). There is also evidence that even when engaged in paid work, women continue as the main carers and those responsible for housework (Guzmán, 2014, Chant, 2002). This results in women engaging mainly in informal part-time jobs that are compatible with their caring duties, where the gender pay gap is also an issue (ECLAC, 2015). Currently, the latest official Chilean statistics reveal that the country continues to have the lowest female participation in the labour market, this is 48, % (INE, 2018) in LA, showing a trend that persists over time.

Findings from Chilean official statistics and international agencies' reports suggest some trends in the direction of conservative gender roles, which follows a pattern in the region. The ECLAC (2015) report set the challenges ahead as improving the autonomy of women and overcoming paternalist approaches focussed on poverty reduction. What is emphasised in this report is the 'social and religious beliefs that inform machismo as the sociocultural barriers to overcome discrimination against women' (ECLAC, 2015, p.63) while warning of the reemergence of conservative familial discourses that prevent women's autonomy. Thus, the place of culture is highlighted.

3.6.2. Gender in State institutions

The issue of how gender is implicated in the responses across public services has not received much attention. Limited research exists regarding the operations of the judicial system, where the main overarching framing for the CP system in Chile, was found to be gender biased (Facio, 2002). A study conducted in Chile links this gendered nature as reflected at organisational level. This logic is evident in a reform introduced to the judiciary that introduced a gender division of labour, placing female judges in charge of Family Courts while Criminal Courts were male based. This is a trend in LA countries (Azócar and Marx, 2015) of considering family issues, dealt at Family Courts, as women's issues.

Biases are found in custody decisions in post-separation scenarios. Research has identified gendered bias reflected in essentialist social constructions on masculinity and femininity. This results in the limited custody being assigned to men, while constructing women as the best suited to have the care of the children. This was identified in research in Mexico (Carrillo, 2013), with the same patterns described in Chile (Aguayo y Sadler, 2011).

Regarding the issue of domestic violence, or intrafamily violence[22], a mixed method study of 140 case files in criminal and family Courts in Chile (Casas y Vargas, 2011) found a lack of accuracy in the recordings and labelling of cases, resulting in overlooking the risks posed to women when child contact is involved.

Another issue is a tendency to push women into seeking agreements, avoiding sanctions for perpetrators (leaving them with public records as perpetrators) along with low conviction rates for the perpetration of violence, favouring instead a therapeutic approach. A lack of understanding of the dynamics of violence is pointed out, with the need to improve responses that are currently lacking a gender analysis (Casas y Vargas, 2011). This is consistent with findings from the international literature, revealing the judicial system appears as a site of gender bias and inequality.

Regarding approaches and the underlying conceptualisations of violence, in the case of Chile, as in other countries in LA, the use of the concept *intra-family violence* is criticised. Casas y Vargas (2011) reflect on how this definition has political implications by obscuring issues of violence against women, masking it with concerns about the family unit. In their research, they identified the dominance of a familial approach, more concerned with

[22] In Chilean legislation, domestic violence is conceptualised as intrafamily violence, understood as "any form of maltreatment that affects physically and psychologically on the part of someone that is a legal partner or in cohabitation, or a biological relative or non-biological but related as descendant or ascendant in relation to the perpetrator, or when this behaviour occurs between the parents of a child, affects an elderly or disabled person under the care or dependency of any of the members of the family. (Biblioteca nacional del congreso/National Library of the Congress, 2018) https://www.bcn.cl/leyfacil/recurso/violencia-intrafamiliar

addressing the family as under threat rather than individual human rights and protecting women, avoiding the gendered conceptualisations of violence. Furthermore, under this framing the violence that takes place in non-married or co-habiting couples is not addressed under the legislation, remaining as common offences and not accessing protection. The constructions around the family unit remain deeply conservative. To illustrate this, it is worth mentioning that Chile was the last LA country to pass a law on divorce in 2004, where remarrying was illegal (Gómez, 2014).

The identified familial approach reveals two interrelated issues. First, the tension with the gender agenda promoted in public policies. Secondly, conservative values preventing change. There is evidence for instance that the gender agenda was strongly resisted and questioned at the time, from right wings politicians to the Catholic Church who promoted the defence of the family and traditional values. The gender agenda was, therefore, adapted to the traditional Chilean politics of consensus that implied compromises (Gómez, 2014).[23]

Regarding gender-based violence, which as was shown in the first section overlaps with child abuse, is significant in LA, including Chile. Given the region has 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicides in the world, the UN has identified it as the most dangerous place for women (UNDP and UN Women, 2017), with violence recognised as being rooted in culture. Within structural factors, the lack of appropriate State service provisions and its fragmentation are significant problems that, in turn, contribute to normalisation (UNDP, and UN Women, 2017). This has made countries such as Mexico and Guatemala (Menjívar and Walsh, 2017), reformulate the concept of Femicide[24] as Feminicide following Lagarde's (2010) inclusion of the complicit State's role through its lack of appropriate responses (see Lagarde, 2010, Menjívar and Walsh, 2017). Overall, it has been found the fragmentation and the narrow approaches to violence (UNDP, 2010, Choup, A, 2016) with persistent failure to address the needs of women to be protected.

[23] A study of documents regarding the politics of legislation in the Chilean congress (Gómez, 2014) suggests that when legislating on contentious issues a gender-neutral approach is preferred by subordinating women's advancement to social cohesion represented in the protection of the family unit. Within this approach, bills that protect the family perceived under threat are favoured.

[24] Femicide, understood as the killing of women because of their gender, following Radford and Russell's (1992) definition, has been introduced as a crime in most Latin American countries (16 by 2015). In Chile, it was introduced in 2010, as the killing of a woman by a partner or an ex partner. This framework has been criticised by grassroots feminist movements that have developed their own observatory of femicide in view of the narrow legal specification that leaves some crimes unrecognised. For instance, while the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity revealed a number of 42 femicides in 2017, the independent observatory of the Chilean network against violence against women recorded 66, criticising the government body's narrow specification, calling to reform legislation (diarioUChile, 2018).

The role of cultural constructions and its impact on people's daily social practices has been consistently recognized by international agencies (UNDP, 2010). The ECLAC report (2015, p. 63) suggests that "the path to gender equality is above all one of cultural change" naming the web of cultural and religious beliefs as a major barrier with the location of motherhood as it's heart. The report concludes that progress made across the region has been "slow and insufficient". In the case of Chile, the assessment found a failure to accomplish the implementation of monitoring tools of gender equality, indicators of violence against women and data about specific groups of women. Furthermore, until then, abortion was illegal[25]. This demonstrates that gender mainstreaming has not been fully integrated. More recently in a joined UNDP and UN Women (2017) assessment report on the region' s commitment to addressing violence against women, it is concluded:

> *The region continues to suffer from the persistence of patriarchal cultural patterns, which are founded on relationships of inequality and inequity between men and women, historically rooted in traditions, customs, religion, mandates, belief systems and symbolic constructions, among other factors* (UNDP and UN Women, 2017, p.77).

What is significant to draw is the impact of cultural constructions on patterns of gender relations, and its link with the high prevalence of violence against women.

However, these international agencies reports are not without criticisms on a wide range of levels. Issues pointed out are the dependence which they endorse (Chant, 2008, Molyneux, 2002, 2007, 2008 Staab, 2010, 2013), the limitations of gender equality within a poverty reduction approach as dictated by the World Bank (Molyneux, 2008) and the 'feminisation of responsibility' (Chant, 2008). With gender discrimination, framed as an obstacle to economic development rather than as an issue of rights and justice (Molyneux, 2009), women become instrumental within international agencies approaches, rendering the gender mainstreaming policy paradigm as technocratic tools (Gideon and Molyneux, 2012),

[25] A bill on therapeutic abortion in three cases: rape, fetal inviability and risk to the mother's life was introduced by ex president Michelle Bachelet in 2017 before leaving government. This has been highly contested involving public tensions with the conservative ideology represented by ruling elites coming from right-wing politicians and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, while having also rejection form an important number of 'pro-life' groups. This created resistance and tensions even after the abortion bill was being put into practice. An important number of doctors claimed their right to object, putting their values first, refusing to conduct abortion in public and private hospitals. This situation vividly illustrates the contentious nature of gendered discourses and how contested women's rights are when perceived as in clash with traditional values. After the bill on therapeutic abortion was passed, a clinic belonging to the Catholic University, the most prestigious in Chile, displayed a huge banner in its main building that read "More than ever, UC (Catholic University) in favour of life" in a clear challenge to President Bachelet, who had also had to face political and public bullying.

in hand with neoliberal policies in LA. Molyneux's (2009) critical analysis of what she calls a "chimera of success" regarding gender equity paradigms, identified the significant gap between the guidelines and the practice (p. 228). This is reflected in Solar's (2009) report on the implementation of the gender perspective across services in Chile, with findings attesting to the lack of embeddedness in organisations.

Within these cultural constructions, policy design has been described as shaped by maternalism, a concept that reflects the socially constructed women's role as carers (Staab, 2012, p.300) in LA. This policy analysis suggests the pervasiveness of a gendering process that places women as 'mothers at the service of the state' (Molyneux, 2007) as social policies tend to reproduce child care inequalities and perpetuate the division of labour and feminisation of poverty (Chant, 2008, Staab, 2010).

This may be analysed in the context of dominant shared values and expectations reflected in the *cultural constructions* pointed out by the UNDP (2010) report. Debusscher (2012) in research examining the implementation of the gender mainstreaming across different LA countries, included Chile, suggested that one issue to consider is the paradigm not being able to challenge gender roles, maintaining women as agents of change without problematising men and their positionality within society. This problem gets reflected in language used in policy documents. Debusscher (2012) suggests a gap between civil society organisations involved in gender equality commitment and the European Union's framing of gender inequality. Within a decolonial understanding, this calls the attention to the ways that imposed framings fail to account for local meanings and constructions, a point which will be adressed in another section.

These findings match some independent research, regarding the impact of these cultural constructions. One finding is that these are not only the outcome of policy frameworks but are embedded within societal attitudes. For instance, Murray (2015) researching patterns of child care services use in Santiago found that embracing of a motherhood identity prevented women from taking advantage of these provisions, with class involved in making this identity significantly salient in a sample of lower-class women compared to their middle or upper-class counterparts. Religious discourses of proper mothering impacted on these women's choices, such as engagement in paid work.

What can be concluded is the issue of cultural constructions permeates all spheres and even the agencies involved in making gender inequality visible, with a gender ideology being reproduced.

3.6.3. Research in CP

In Chile, despite the emphasis placed on policy design on mainstreaming gender, research on the subject in the CP area is almost non-existent. As mentioned in chapter two, only one small-scale exploratory study conducted by an NGO SENAME collaborator (see ACHNU, 2008) addressed gender related issues within practices. Although the central aim was the analysis of the maltreatment of children, the study offers insights regarding a gendering process in interventions such as mothers being the primary target of interventions and also practitioners' concerns regarding their lack of knowledge around gender analysis. The same finding was part of a study analysing the meanings and strategies used by practitioners when applying the gender perspective in the work with children (Stormezan, 2016). These two local studies suggest that practitioners are dealing with uncertainty regarding what gender means and how to integrate it effectively into the analysis of their practices, with no comprehensive guidelines available from SENAME. This corroborates the lack of embeddedness of the 'gender perspective' pointed out earlier.

More specifically, regarding practices, a study conducted in Chile (Muñoz, 2013) revealed the role of socially constructed beliefs in impacting upon policy frameworks into professional practices within the youth justice provisions of SENAME. In this study, the cultural dimension was a key factor in preventing the improvement in policies and practices as practitioners were found to be sustaining cultural assumptions that constrained change. Key findings were consistent in observing:

- Stereotyped representations of families regarding gender roles, particularly in a subsample of the Southern region, with more rurality involved.
- Focus on intervention with mothers underpinned by assumptions about male resistance to engage, with a tacit endorsement of the breadwinner model that prevented seeking this engagement more proactively.
- Staff stereotyped constructions centred on deficits, such as dysfunctionality in families.
- The relation between the notion of 'poor' family and its incapacity to change as underpinned by classical understandings about the 'culture of poverty'.

The researcher emphasises that while gender was not a central theme, it was found relevant across the different stereotypes constructed. This evidence is relevant for my

research, as, even when the focus was not gender it emerges as shaping professional and institutional responses.

This study matches previous local research on professional perceptions of families (Gómez y Haz, 2008). Narratives of 'multi-problem and dysfunctional families, within transgenerational harm*'* were also consistent. Class appeared in underlying constructions of a 'culture of poverty' (p. 59) as in Muñoz' study. In the data offered as evidence, there was a mention of the responsibility being put only on mothers, yet this was not picked up for the discussion of findings, revealing less concern regarding gender inequalities. This study is small and as other studies limited to Santiago, it reflects on issues that are overrepresented compared to the varied dynamics across the long geography of the country. However, it shows some trends regarding practitioners' approaches, having some commonalities with Muñoz's study.

In another small-scale study, the same negative constructions of families were a visible result. This was a study that reports stakeholders views in residential care institutions and foster care programmes in Chile where, the researchers frame as a 'stigmatising prism', a dominant feature of the accounts regarding families (Muñoz *et al*, 2015). As with two studies mentioned above, this reveals a strong assumption that involves class-based bias and determinist views on a capacity to change as influencing practitioners' constructions.

Finally, in a small-scale study conducted by SENAME (2007) in a characterisation of women giving their children for adoption, it is found that there is a tendency to pathologise women's decisions, underpinned by psychological theories of maternal deprivation and the repetition of cycles of transgenerational harm and dysfunctional patterns of family relationships. The pregnant women are conceptualised as *mothers in conflict with their motherhood* (See chapter two, Fig. 1). The study is mainly based upon descriptive statistics, which can be considered as a limitation, but also provide evidence of the high rates of women reversing their decisions to give up their children for adoption after being in touch with SENAME practitioners. This resulted in the younger, single and less educated mothers changing their initial decision and keeping their children. This may have implications, acknowledged by the study, regarding the influence practitioners can have. This may reveal the role of ideologies that are reflected in the strategies adopted with these women, an issue that should be further explored.

3.7. Gender studies in LA: the masculinity trend

The study of gender has developed more systematically since the end of the 1980's through to the mid 1990's, when funding came from NGOs and international agencies, within the institutionalisation of the gender mainstreaming paradigm (see chapter two) and the Gender and Development framework (GAD). As analysed by De Babieri (2004), this also involved a shaping on the gender research as fitting the interests of these international agencies. One clear example is the shift experienced from studying gender in relation to the situation of women to a trend in masculinity studies and fatherhood (Valdés and Olavarría, 1998, 2003, 1998, Guttman, 1996, 2003, Fuller, 1998, 2003). The shift from a first framework known as Women and Development to the GAD framework was in response to critics of the disproportionate focus on women, and the need to see gender as relational (Debusscher, 2012). Within this movement a trend known as 'men-streaming' (Wanner and Wadham, 2015, Chant and Gutman, 2002) promoted the theorising of men. It was not effective in the long term, though, as it did not have an impact on the gender agenda in the region, largely invisible outside of academia (Wanner and Wadham, 2015, Aguayo y Sadler, 2011).

In general, the development of this type of research offers a contradictory picture.In the mid- 1990's it was suggested that gender roles and masculinities had been subject to a 'crisis' (Viveros, 2003, Olavarría, 2003) in the context of increasing economic and social transformation fuelled by globalisation and the incorporation of women into the labour force. In the context of Chile, Olavarría (1998) claimed that men were increasingly assuming the domestic space pushed by unemployment, threatening their traditional construction as breadwinners. This optimism has permeated the study of masculinity for some time. Valdés (2009) in a qualitative study conducted with fathers in Chile suggests that men would be distancing themselves from traditional models of the previous generation, with the 'industrial man' who represented the breadwinner prototype, beggining to disappear. This research failed to acknowledge the sample as representative only of middle and upper-class families, leaving lower class fathers' constructions unrepresented. This is relevant as class has been identified as a strong marker in Chile, as analysed in chapter two, and seen across different pieces of research. Significant regarding constructions of gender relations is the work of Montecino (2002), a Chilean feminist scholar who has analysed masculinities she found in low-class families as *neomachismo*. She noted the persistence of relations of subordination in the way these men assert a fatherhood that is dominant and authoritarian. The gender order

relies on the mother as the family's administrator, providing the domestic structuring. This matches a maternalist ideology that reproduces a gender division of labour.

Olavarría studies with fathers in Chile (2001a, 2001b, 2002) have offered mixed results. While the first studies were prematurealy optimistic regarding changing patterns of men reporting a more involved and affective fatherhood, later Olavarría (2005) concludes that apparent changes in masculinities in Chilean men are not supported by evidence. Optimistic public discourses collude to keep male privileges and the profound inequities in the domestic division of labour, that remains invisible and are subject to intense gender relations negotiations. For instance, it was contended that women were, in fact, those responsable for mobilising changes in their partners, pressuring for equality in household duties. Men, however, continued constructing their roles as secondary in 'helping' their female partners, perceiving them as primarily responsible. It is concluded there is a significant discrepancy between the discourses of men (their accounts) in qualitative interviews and their actual practices, revealed through other sources of research. A survey conducted in Santiago revealed that 71% of unpaid domestic labour is performed by women (INE, 2008), a trend confirmed by an ECLAC assessment report (2015).

Having observed this, it is worth noting that relying only on interviews is problematic when the issues explored are concerned with social representations. It must be mentioned that most of these studies are focussing only on urban men in Santiago, and thus, lacking ethnic and geographical diversity, considering that Chile has extensive rural areas, which contrast with research in other LA countries. It may be analysed that there is a bias rooted in the Chilean tendency to overlook indigenous heritage, favouring whitheness. However, something to draw from these findings is the inequities in the division of labour, with class as a strong marker intersecting with gender. However, the way results are presented can misguide this issue. For instance, in one study Olavarría constructs domestic service or *nanny* (nana) mostly found in middle and upper-class families as 'a professional of domestic service'. This language use does not reflect the fact that this type of job tends to be performed by migrants, often Peruvian or Mapuche women, coming to work in the capital city, which reflects a historical class-based and racial system of Chilean society that relies heavily on cheap female domestic labour. This is made clearer in a recent study (Madrid, 2017). This research on hegemonic masculinity and fatherhood with upper-class men revealed how the service of in-house nannies relieved these families from the need of fathers' involvement in household activities, reflecting on the gender and class inequalities that reproduce subordination. Then, gender and class, despite not being explicitely mentioned in this

research, and more often race and ethnicity, are involved the hegemonic position that maintains men as breadwinners only. To this date, research in Chile reveals caring as a feminised responsibility (Campos y Muñoz, 2018).

Looking at the literature in masculinity studies in LA, the idea of the crisis of masculinity seems resistance to evidence discussed above as in a more recent study Olavarría (2017) still argues the crisis of the hegemonic masculinity as derived from changes in the gender division of labour that causes tension in the traditional family.

On an analysis of parenting across cultures, Bush and Peterson (2014), observed the pervasiveness of a patriarchal structure dominating men's representations of fatherhood in Chile. This evidence directly contradicts claims within academic research on masculinity on the changing, fluid nature of masculinity that has criticised the stereotype of machismo (Beattie, 2002, Guttman, 1996, González, 2004). Regarding the argument, local feminist grassroots organisations such as the *Chilean Network against Violence against Women* [26] consider it central to buttressing of the pervasiveness of violence against women. From this social movement, not much transformation is seen in the discourses of gender relations but rather continuity, shown by its calls to end machismo and sexist education[27].

The persistence of cultural beliefs which sustain inequalities described by international agencies and the public visibility of its expression in violence against women seems an enduring feature of the Chilean society that can be understood as underpinning social discourses. A study on gender violence in rural areas in Chile (Valdés *et al*, 2009) documented the impact of cultural beliefs. Findings revealed women's perspectives as endorsing the hegemonic position of men in governing the family and their duty as submissive to such order. Domestic violence was understood by them as a normal feature of gender relations, learned from their mothers, with some changing patterns in the younger generation, more informed by legal measures and sources of support. In general, across research with LA women, it has been found that traditional gender values such as machismo

[26] The Chilean network against violence against women is a network formed by grassroot feminist non- governmental organisations and independent groups working since 1990 in making activist campaigns to make visible the issue of gender-based violence. http://www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl/presentacion/ This network has led public campaigns to raise awareness of cultural attitudes. Their most famous motto 'Caution! Machismo kills' has been part of a campaign (Aguayo and Sadler, 2011) since 2007 involving public demonstrations and education on the role of cultural beliefs. Part of their endeavours has been an independent observatory of femicide, in the absence of accurate official statistics.

[27] In 2018 a feminist wave led by the student movement in Chile has demanded public recognition of the different forms of violence against women including sexual harassment inside the universities (The Guardian, 2018). At the time of writing there have been cases of lecturers expelled from university departments following investigation of students' claims. The *me-too* movement seems to be influencing this sudden wave, which has gained support from the public opinion, despite some emergent backlash, which in turn has sought to stigmatise this movement and the fight for LGBT rights' by labelling it 'gender ideology', and constructing it as a extremist threat to Chilean traditional values.

have an influence in tolerance to domestic violence and patterns of help-seeking (Kelly, 2009). This has been consistent in research in Maranismo (Castillo *et al*, 2009, Montecino, 1996, Murray, 2015, Finno-Velasquez and Nwabuzor, 2017), that reveals how this gender identity construct explains women's tolerance to domestic violence and normative framings (Vandello *et al.*, 2009).

The issue of gender identity and relations in LA is complex in nature. Gender roles have been analysed as having been shaped by family values (Valdés *et al*, 2005). Family ties remain highly relevant, with families being a primary system of social support, but at the same time of social control. Within the institution of the family, gender roles are well defined, with the endorsement of the breadwinner model and the patriarchal order is still visible, despite with variations. For instance, research on representations of family and parenthood in Chile (Valdés *et al*, 2005) shows that following class belonging, representations of fatherhood are varied; while for motherhood it is more universal and monolithic, articulating a female identity, regardless of class.

Family values and their system of gender structuring have been found as associated with two key constructs: machismo and marianismo, which are often invoked to describe the ascription to cultural gender norms in LA (O' Connor, 2014). Machismo has been a prominent concept and is clearly understood as male hegemony and patriarchy, represented by hypermasculinity and male dominance. Marianismo, as discussed by Stevens (1973) is the other side (see chapter one), structuring women's identity. Machismo has been subject to some debate. It has been suggested that the widespread perception that machismo is a Latin trait is a pervasive discourse that serves to stereotype the region of the Global South (Gutmann, 2003) while failing to recognise the machismo at the heart of patriarchy, being analysed as global. While patriarchy is a system of gender relations analysed as historically developed in most societies (Hines, 2015), it is still strongly recognised in LA societies.

Any study of involving gender in LA must include an examination of the meanings attached to gender roles. An interrogation of these meanings and their clashes with Western claims deserves attention in response to emergent criticism of Western feminism. At this point it is necessary to clarify that LA scholarly tradition is more theoretically driven than empirical, which reflects a different approach and paradigm of knowledge building, something to discuss further in following sections. What follows in the next section is a more theoretical analysis of the construction of gender that is pertinent to the context, while introducing concepts that build upon the theoretical framework for this research.

3.7.1. From Patriarchy to hegemonic masculinity

Linked with the debate outlined above vis-à-vis the lens of patriarchy in LA, it must be recognised that the concept has been criticised, particularly by post-structuralism regarding it as essentialist (Walby, 2009). Post-colonial studies also point out that patriarchy is not a universal and fixed category, failing cultural and historical aspects in different societies (Hines, 2015), something claimed in LA. However, as empirical analyses show, it is a concept that is still recognised as valid to account for male-dominated societies. In LA it can be traced to gender norms under the model of the 'pater family' brought with Iberic norms (Strasser and Tisman, 2010, Jelin, 2007) and as such, a legacy of colonisation. This idea is found in Mies' (1986) seminal Marxist analysis of patriarchy. Her account of a matrix of capital accumulation at a global scale clearly points to colonisation upon which a capitalist gender order was globalised. Central is the gendered division of labour in which patriarchy fits. Under this male dominated model, the *housewifisation* of women was reproduced within the nuclear family and was enforced across working-class people in order to serve capitalist interests. In this global project, discourses such as religion have been allies to domesticate men and women. This is an interesting idea as the religious discourse was certainly a tool that was brought to LA with the colonisation and shaping the emergent order of accumulation. Shaped by these historical processes, and as seen in chapter two, it was certainly relevant within the development in Chile's nation-building.

This structural analysis is pertinent to violence as evidence as reviewed in section one. It shows that women are positioned as the primary victims of violence, which is intersected by structural categories of inequality and not only the symbolic order. In this thesis, while discourses are of fundamental importance, it is understood they also respond to the material conditions, a point I wish to develop further in this study. Bringing back the theoretical lens underpinning this thesis, Connell's development of gender theory is key. While not abandoning patriarchy, Connell has integrated within the concept of hegemonic masculinity the Gramscian analysis of hegemony. This allows an explanation that integrates the role played by ideology to secure dominance, which is rooted in consensus rather than force. This allows an understanding of power relations based on hegemony which is legitimated through culture, institutions and a symbolic system that perpetuates the hierarchical and unequal gender relations as normative. Thus, while not abandoning the structural, denotes the symbolic order. The concept of hegemonic masculinity for Connell is (1995, p.77):

A configuration of gender practice, which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.

The concept involves a cultural ideal of manhood as a normative standard to achieve and thus, articulates power relations as departing from gender. The hegemonic aspect becomes materialised in the conscious and unconscious subordination of women to men, which can be discursively constructed. This normative manhood impacts not only upon women but also upon men producing subordinated or subaltern masculinities, following power relations. In the ideological work of hegemony, the acceptance of such a gender order is reflected in complicit masculinities when supporting it involves a benefit from a patriarchal order (Connell and Messershmidt 2005), which Connell conceptualises as the *patriarchal dividend* (Connell, 2005, Connell and Pearse, 2015, p.140).

As with patriarchy, while critics have accused it of reductionism for not reflecting cultural diversity (Hearn, 2012, Robinson, 2015) evidence of its appropriation within the scholarly literature is as widespread as including Global South countries in Africa and LA, where the recognition of multiple masculinities has proven to be a useful conceptual tool [28](Messerschmidt, 2012). Gender studies in LA have appropriated Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987, Connell and Meserschmidt, 2005) to shed light on the analysis of hierarchies that in this context is reworked to account for cultural and racial differences as legacies of colonisation. This is developed in the following section.

3.7.2. Conceptualising gender in LA: integrating ethnic relations and historical legacies

In the context of L.A, the analysis of gender has followed a particular development. It has been regarded as a Western construction (Lugones, 2010) as its study started there. The Western informed gender conceptualisation was increasingly imported from the Global North in the 1990's, appropriated by the feminist movement (Falquet, 2014) and scholars (see Lamas, 1986, De Babieri, 1993) who, in the quest for gender equality, welcomed the challenge to essentialist constructions. It was also within women's political mobilisation for human rights where women's rights (Jelin, 2007) became also politicised by questioning the binary and naturalistic approaches. In this vein, one issue made visible was male control and

[28] Some articulations have added new perspectives, such as in the study of Talbot and Quayle (2010) 'The Perils of Being a nice guy: Contextual variation in five young Women's Constructions of acceptable Hegemonic and alternative masculinities'. *Men and Masculinities* 13:3-29. in South Africa where the idea of "emphasised feminities" sheds light on the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinities through women's contribution, a point to be addressed in following sections.

appropriation of the reproductive nature of women (De Babieri, 1993). This is well documented in the politics of motherhood in Chile, analysed by Pieper Mooney (2009), a study supporting claims of gender orders in LA as systems of male domination (De Babieri, 2004).

Despite an institutionalisation of gender in public policy discourses within the framing of the gender mainstreaming paradigm, academic analysis of gender across LA scholars added other dimensions not reflected in these institutional frameworks. These are race, ethnicity, class and location, while integrating Connell's conceptualisation of hegemonic masculinity. For instance, Fuller (1998, 2003), within masculinity studies, argues that gender identity is constructed within multiple differences according to age, class and ethnicity, with sex as not the single category defining it as it is linked to its place within racial and ethnic as well as regional and institutional categories. Therefore, there would be multiple masculinities. Her findings in research with men suggest that marriage and fatherhood are defining points in the entrance to adult life when masculinity becomes enacted through the acquisition of maleness. This is also found in studies in Chile (Olavarría, 2003, Madrid, 2006), where men define their masculine identity through the assertion of sexuality with fatherhood. For Fuller (1998, 2003) gender relations negotiations are based on the interchange of monogamous sex relations and domestic service to the men by women in exchange for income and position within the society. These are viewed as complementary as both, men and women contribute to a unitary family project (Fuller, 1998, 2003).

The analysis has also integrated the legacies of colonisation. Such is case of Viveros (2003, 2016) whose understanding of masculinity incorporates the construction of a *subaltern male identity* resulting from the assertion of the white dominant European hegemonic masculinity. Subjugation not only operated against dominated and colonised women but racialised and dominated men in LA (2016).

Similarly, Hernández (1998), with the concept of *subordinated ethnic identities* explores hierarchical stratification in indigenous and Afro-American societies where subordination is enacted and legitimated in the social authority of men over women. She argues the cultural legitimation of hegemonic masculine identities is the result of indigenous men negotiating or coping with discriminatory experiences outside their communities, as they are more actively involved in public life. For Hernández (1998) the complementarity of *subordinated ethnic identities* and hegemonic masculine identities are developed at the expense of harm to indigenous and Afro-American women. What is important in this articulation of male hegemony is the integration of race and ethnicity to the analysis,

something less visible in the international literature on gender, less concerned with these categories. When visible, it is not in relation to this context, but the Anglophone colonised world, denoting the marginalisation of LA. This is a particular development of feminist thinking positioned as denouncing hierarchies that have been further developed in the feminism inscribed in decolonial studies, reviewed in the following section.

At this point, however, it is important to notice the presence of some tensions. On the one hand, across some scholars that were more engaged in the institutionalisation of gender in the State, the understanding of gender as socially constructed is clear, along with the rejection of the biological reductionism (Richards, 2004, De Babieri, 2004, Lamas, 1986), while other scholars do place gender relations in the context of the sexed bodies and the reproductive domain as constituting identity. It is the accomplishment of the heterosexual rite of sexuality which defines masculinity, an essentialised construction of masculinity that goes back to biology. This reveals two positions regarding the conceptualisation of gender. It shows a tension between a Westernised version and another that seems to respond to local meanings attached to gender, which are necessarily linked to the specificities of the region, as discussed in the next section.

3.7.3. Coloniality of gender: towards decolonising knowledge and the politics of gender

With gender clearly mobilised and framed by international agendas of development, resistance has emerged to what has been dubbed the co-optation of LA feminists (Espinoza, 2009). A critical perspective has now developed within Decolonial studies sytematically problematising imported conceptualisations foisted upon LA.

Overall, the Decolonial project is aimed at revealing and challenge eurocentrism from the Global North, used as a resistance to "the assumption that colonialism and its effects have been safely left in the past and are irrelevant today" (Harding (2017, pp.624). The aim of decolonial thinking is framed as enacting the *epistemologies of the South* (De Sousa, 2014), challenging the Global North domination and its modern paradigm within a process of *de-linking* from this paradigm, moving away from the search for commonalities but rather acknowledging differences Mignolo (2006, p. 329) and visibilising the marginalised indigenous (Harding, 2016).

Within decolonial studies, decolonial feminism rejects the transnational feminist project (see Mendoza, 2010, Espinoza, 2009) and particularly international agencies, being sceptical about the dialogue between the Global North and the Global South because of hierarchies already established. Espinoza (2009), following Mohanty's (1988) analysis of

western constructions of "third world" women as narrow and lacking recognition of diversity criticizes the discursive colonisation from Western feminism towards the Global South women and their struggles. The critique takes the technocratisation of gender and the co-optation of LA feminists that serves the purpose of the purchase of feminism from the North through Development agencies. They would fail to speak for the experiences of marginalised women in the Global South. She follows Lugones, a LA feminist, who drawing on Quijano's concept of the *Coloniality of power* (2000)[29] has introduced the *coloniality of gender* (Lugones, 2010). Lugones explains the *coloniality of gender* (2010) as the capitalist racialised gender oppression, by which the dichotomous categories of gender relations were introduced with Western modern colonial thinking. Gender, then, would be a colonial system introduced to the colonised world eroding the complementary nature of pre-colonial gender relations in LA and the Caribbean. The same claim is made by Mendoza (2010) who sees colonisation with its gender system as creating the conditions for the subordination of women that did not exist before. Gender, therefore, as a colonial concept (Schiwy, 2010) has come into question across these scholars. Underpinning the critique is the recognition of an indigenous cosmological worldview of complementary gender relations as differing from the Western system of subordination (Burman, 2011).

This perspective of gender helps to understand the tensions with the politics of gender as promoted by policy developments starting in mid-nineties, and how gender has been questioned amongst some LA scholars and activists (Richards, 2005). The gender language and discourse are regarded as a Western idea that disrupts indigenous cosmological views that entails a different ontology, and this is part of divisions across LA feminists. As analysed in Falquet's (2014) account, the gender politics integrated through international agencies has been criticised by those who alert on the colonialist approach that endorses hierarchies.

What is integrated into decolonial analysis is that hierarchies have been racialised and gendered with discourses of supposedly inferior races. This was the model exported and expanded in the colonial project with European patriarchy and sexual politics becoming hegemonic creating subordinated identities, pathologised in their social and gender norms (Grosfoguel, R. 2010, p.72). This is understood in the politics of Othering, or the concept of subaltern identity discussed by Spivak (1988) in subaltern studies. The discourse of the Other is a key idea in the analysis of racism in Europe (Miles ,1989; Van Dijk,1993) by which the

[29] As explained in chapter 1, coloniality of power refers to the persistence of Western domination developed through colonisation. The decolonial analysis of power and gender departs from the significant fact that colonisation was first enacted in Latin America and the Caribbean, articulating hierarchies that persist until today.

categorisation of people according to race saw in Europe the emergence of constructions of the Other, based on cultural difference, with inferiority attached to it as a Eurocentric world was taken as the standard (Miles, 1989). This is a key argument for Decolonialists to reject the assimilationist multicultural project as a State discourse (Vera, 2017).

3.7.4. Race and culture in the analysis of gender-based violence

One emergent critique has been the disregard of intersecting categories of oppression in the analysis of gender relations and violence, while privileging homogenising discourses. A critique that echoes Bacca Zinn (1994), from black feminism, regarding western feminism as failing to recognise the diversity of family organisations according to class and race, with the result of marginalising racial-ethnic families as 'cultural cases' (p. 20). This has been documented by research involving minority communities in European contexts, where cultural background is often involved in the construction of otherness. It is the case that the non- dominant culture is seen as deviant (Gloor and Meier, 2011). Constructions of culture have been found to mask racial prejudice (Potter and Whetherell, 1992), with culture articulated around a racial categorisation as discussed by Miles (1989). This allows an understanding of the use of assimilationist, colonialist approaches that have come under scrutiny, providing support for decolonialist scholars claims. This is important to bring to this research concerning indigenous culture in their contact with State services.

However, there is another crucial issue to bear in mind. From an international perspective, the issue of gender in the context of culture has been controversial. As discussed by Okin (1999), there are tensions between culture as tradition and the situations of women's rights being violated. Some argue that Westernised approaches fail to recognise indigenous gender relations by applying moral standards that are alien to the culture (Segato, 2014).

However, the issue of violence deserves attention. As reviewed, the analysis of gender-based violence across LA has been framed in the context of colonisation. Explanations emphasise this historical process in translating structural violence into the domestic sphere with disempowered indigenous subaltern masculinities having to be re-enacted through violence against women (Viveros, 2016). This is a point of tension. For instance, Segato (2014) in Brazil with her particularly problematic concept of 'patriarchy of low impact', enacted by indigenous men, which she contrasts to a 'patriarchy of high impact or modern', embodied by what she defines as a form of 'corporate colonial State front' that would cause more harm by disempowering indigenous men in the moralising of indigenous gender relations.

In Chile, this tension has emerged with the issue of violence in Mapuche families, also linked to the impact of colonisation (Bacigalupo, 2007). For instance, this violence has been linked to alcohol misuse, serving also to perpetuate prejudice within the Chilean society (Richards, 2010). It is known from historical research that the use of alcohol was part of the colonisation process, regarded as an effective weapon introduced to subjugate the Mapuche people over three hundred years of struggle with the Spanish conquerors. Historical accounts of direct witnesses of the period state that *it was alcohol rather than the sword the most effective weapon to undermine resistance* (Verniory, 2001, emphasis added). Later, the use of alcohol as a coping strategy out of the colonial trauma is something that has only recently started to be discussed and documented. Thus, the claim regarding the impact of structural colonial violence on current issues of domestic violence within the indigenous communities has support coming from historical research.

One issue is whether violence was part of pre-colonial gender regimes. For instance, polygamy was common in the pre-colonial Mapuche society (Caniguan, 2012). Further research is needed to explore whether violence in indigenous people can be conceptualised using 'western eyes' (Mohanty, 1988) and on the other hand, to what extent violence was part of their gender order. Thirdly, how colonisation and the gendered nature it assumed intersects with the legacy of male dominance or machismo that has been portrayed in the region. These ongoing debates around gender relations, violence and its shaping within contextual and structural factors such as colonisation, globalisation and neoliberalism are only recently emerging within the scholarly literature on the continent (Vera, 2017). As such, it is still of complex nature as the politics of resistance given the context of neoliberal policies that impact more harshly upon indigenous communities make their struggles for self-determination and cultural rights more salient. This has involved marginalising indigenous women's experiences. Richards (2004) reflects that in the need to reinforce indigenous identity against the Chilean State that oppresses them, the indigenous world has often denied gender violence within their communities as identity and the struggle for indigenous right's recognition was regarded as a more salient and urgent issue. This has been preventing a discussion on gender asymmetry by the primacy of political struggle against the State. Also, this invisibility has been played out by State machineries, such as SERNAM in Chile (Richards, 2004, Vera, 2017). A joint report from ECLAC (2013) on gender equity in LA and the Caribbean argues that due to the complexity of the cultural construction of gender and lack of studies on indigenous people, there is a lack of knowledge informing policies that are

pertinent. One problem is this statement is reproducing marginalisation through the cultural explanation discussed as problematic above. It may be analysed as coloniality.

Given the lack of pertinent knowledge of indigenous people, colonialist constructions of Others reduce and simplify them as homogeneous cultures, while in the encounters with colonisers some hybridity has occurred[30], as Bacigalupo (2003) analyses following ethnographic research with Mapuche women. From a cultural studies perspective, there has been a discussion on the blurring of Western/non-Western dichotomy in the crossing of borderlands as positioned by Mexican Anzaldúa (2012). There is an exercise of transcultural and heterogeneity dialogue. Hall's (1997) approach to cultural studies emphasised the fluidity of identities in the context of post-colonial relationships. They can turn blurred and not fixed, revealing different ways of experiencing interethnic relations in these contexts, where processes of acculturation must be considered as a source for analysis. The issue of gender identity emerges as central within these interethnic relationships here. For instance, Bacigalupo (2007) found in research with Mapuche women the endorsement of the complementarity gender egalitarianism of "different but equal" that supports a gender division of labour. This legitimises men in the public domain and women in the home, as traditional in the Mapuche dynamics. An open rejection of Western feminism was found when problematising this order, with the issue of machismo regarded as a Chilean/Western imposition contributing to create division between men and women. As such, undermining their struggles for cultural rights against the Chilean State, identified as the enemy (Richards, 2004).

However, not all the women are involved in such political commitment and some have talked about unspoken subjects (Richards, 2004, Reuque Paillalef and Mallon, 2002). Thus, while some see the dangers of Western feminism, others construct it as a resource, especially the younger generation.[31] As Radcliffe *et al*., (2003) reflect, domestic violence is highly contentious for indigenous gender politics. In that regard, it would be important for future research to bring the voices of the indigenous women about their daily experiences and needs. In Chile, for instance, a recent local study involving experiences of Mapuche women

[30] Regarding this idea, Mexican Nestor Garcia-Canclini coined the concept 'hybrid cultures' to analyse the mix that has occurred between traditional and modern in popular culture where an interchange of cultures results in constant interaction becoming blured the limits of traditional, modern or contemporary. The main point is that he sees the potential for multiculturalism (See Garcia-Canclini, N. (1990). *Culturas híbridas: estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad/Hibrid cultures: estrategies to get in and out of modernity.* Mexico, D.F: Grijalbo.

[31] There is an emergent Mapuche feminist movement in Chile with Mapuche women starting to question these loyalties based on political aims and traditional gender norms (Vera, 2016). This open a window to make more visible the issues discussed here but going beyond the scope of this thesis.

in the Araucaria found that they perceived the State as failing to address domestic violence in cases where the 169 ILO agreement was applied to exonerate Mapuche perpetrators of domestic violence from legal prosecution. They accuse the State of being racist for not addressing their experiences of abuse under the accommodated intercultural approach. (Mercado, *et al*., 2015). There have been claims of SERNAM as constructing a *racialised normative feminity* that marginalises Mapuche women (Vera, 2018). In Mercado *et al*., (2015) research, Mapuche women identified themselves as victims of two types of violence. One, which is external, materialised in the State's institutional violence and racial discrimination and another that is internal, the domestic violence and its normalisation along with the social scrutiny when they advocate for the violence against women and children, interpreted as undermining their indigenous heritage.

What appears to be the case is that culture is intersecting with ethnicity to map understandings of gender norms and within that, gender-based violence. This is something to examine further. Even though the cultural explanation for minority ethnic groups helps to understand dynamics of gender relations and patterns of violence, as Chantler and Gangoli (2011) assert, this may result in leaving minority women unprotected when adhering to the cultural explanation that does not question the dominant community culture.

Intersectionality is helpful here for the analysis of power relations and experiences of oppression as the intersecting of different and interrelated sites of identity, where gender, race-ethnicity, class, belonging act as markers for oppression to be exercised. Crenshaw (1991) highlights the multilayered and overlapping structures of subordination that make certain women more likely to be oppressed (Cho *et al.*, 2013). This certainly applies to indigenous women in the intersection of different sources of inequality that in Chile are highly visible. On the other hand, these intersecting identities complexify the analysis of gendered cultural constructions considering the issue of different epistemologies, as reviewed.

3.8. Towards a cultural analysis of LA gender identities: a framework

As seen in the previous sections, conceptualising gender in LA must consider the impact of colonisation in structuring identities. This is the result of the encounter and a clash still visible in these societies, resulting in a hybridisation of two different worldviews and the impact on the colonised. A cultural psychology informs that gender identity is dependent on culture and is historical (Kurtis and Adams, 2013). This is integrated by Montecino (1996) in Chile, with her reworking of Marianismo as the foundation of gender relations within the

legacy of colonisation and the process of *mestizaje* as a biological and cultural mix (Harding, 2016).

In the construction of gender there seems to be a consistent marginalisation of the indigenous *cosmovision*, with gender norms highly shaped by coloniality. The maternalist feature of the society was shaped by the structural order created by indigenous women rearing alone their mestizo children in the absence of a father figure (the colonisers perpetrators). This gender order made the centrality of mothers the defining feature of Chilean society, shared by LA and its maternalist ideology. The imposition of Catholic values enacted this discourse that matched the previous indigenous cult of fertility that valued motherhood, becoming reflected in Marianismo (Pastor, 2010).

The study of the historical social construction of motherhood in LA (O'Connor, 2014) and Chile Pieper Mooney (2009) emphasises its complexities, where forms of essentialism are identified in women' s actively endorsing maternalist ideals through historical and political processes (O'Connor, 2014)[32]. As such, public discourses enact this source of identity, endorsing the essentialised binary construction that embraces maternalist moral superiority (Richards, 2004, Molyneux, 2000) as the colonial order sought. Spivak (1988) has analysed the "strategic essentialism" as a resource of identity, which derives from the need to cope with assimilationist strategies, which may apply to this context (Harding, 2016). In Chile, the prominence of motherhood is enacted in public discourses and popular culture, and as Montecino analyses (2006) despite socioeconomic changes and new roles taken by women out of the home, the ideal of the Mother prevails in multiple and subtle forms beyond the social to penetrate psychic structures in a persistent Marianismo.

Summary

Some key issues and themes that can be identified in the literature found in Chile and LA suggesting:

- Gender, although made explicit in policy design due to the international acquired agenda of the gender mainstreaming paradigm, has failed to become fully integrated in policies and practices, with progress in gender equality lagging behind. Cultural constructions play a role in keeping gender roles within normative framimgs, with the breadwinner's model reproduced by policies and State institutions as well as across

[32] It has been widely analysed how motherhood and emphasised feminity was used as a political tool in human rights struggles in the dictatorships period in Chile and Argentina (Jelin, 1996, Waylen, 1996)

social practices. Caring is still a feminised duty highly essentialised and reproduced in families under maternalist ideals.

- Both in research and policy design in Chile have overlooked experiences of ethnic minorities, who appear marginalised in public discourses, which is the hands with class as a strong marker for discrimination.
- Gender appears contested in the region, revealing the clash between conceptualisations informing the gender mainstreaming paradigm coming from the Global North and gender identity shaped by culture in the context of colonisation and its legacies. The issue of domestic violence has been linked to the impact of colonisation in indigenous communities, yet more research is neeed.
- Research informing on practices in CP is scarce and limited to small-scale projects. However, a pattern can be identified regarding findings on the negative constructions of families as services users with determinist assumptions. Practices in CP seem to be stigmatising families and prone to be centred around deficits and resistance to change.

This review has informed the place of cultural constructions as key in the LA context, while international literature consistently points at the role of discourses in shaping not only policies and State responses but across social practices in the reproduction of gender identities. While clearly differences are seen in approaches and types of literature, the chapter has set out the commonalities of the discourses that feminise the care of children while endorsing a breadwinner's model that places men as less central to children's caring and well-being. Gender appears as a bias that places mothers and fathers as unequally positioned by practitioners and policymakers, something to examine in the context proposed, with the methods outlined and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methods

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in the first chapter, this research explores how gender is implicated in CP practices in Chile through the constructions of mothers and fathers repectively. I have previously outlined the conceptual framework for this research and built a literature that informs analysis of the topic. This discussed key debates around the conceptualisation of gender relations and identity in the context of LA and Chile, something relevant to consider as the main body of literature pertain to other contexts. Given that, I argued for the culturally situated method of analysis. As noted in the previous chapter, both the international and regional literature revealed the central role of discourse and cultural constructions in shaping policy and practice. However, little research has explored discourses systematically. This made me consider discourse analysis as a method, although, a combination of analytic approaches is the final strategy, as demanded by the data generated.

This chapter describes and discusses the methods chosen to conduct this research. It is organised into two main sections. Firstly, following the outline of aims and questions guiding this research I discuss methodological choices and argue my epistemological standpoint, providing evidence of its applicability to the study of the topic. Secondly, I describe the research design, detailing the research process from access to data collection and the analytical process. I describe and discuss the development of the analysis, focussing in more detail in the CDA (critical discourse analysis) conducted using Fairclough's (2003) approach. Finally, I address issues of ethical considerations and my positionality as a researcher, while discussing the validity of this study.

4.2 Research aims and questions

Taking the evidence provided by the literature and the location of gender in practices found in other contexts I am exploring its place in Chile by taking into consideration the differences as what has been found in other countries may not be the case in Chile or LA. Therefore, I am not in search of specific issues but more openly looking at how gender is revealed in constructions of service users in CP settings in Chile. This aim, as oulined in the introduction, is broken down as follows:

- To identify dominant discourses and narratives reflected in professional or practitioners' everyday tasks in child protection organisations in Chile.
- To identify and explore to what extent theoretical or organisational approaches interact with underlying gendered assumptions.
- To analyse the barriers that these discourses may represent in delivering effective and coherent professional interventions with families.

With those aims considered, the research questions that guide this project are:

RQ1. What constructions appear as dominant and shared by CP practitioners in Chile in relation to mothers and fathers and how gender may be implicated?
RQ2.What is the role that professionals have given to gender throughout their practices?
RQ3. What theories and approaches, implicit and explicit, appear to guide professional practices and how they may interact with their constructions around gender?

4.3. Methodological considerations

Most of the research in CP and child welfare has involved 'naturally occurring' interactions and everyday practices, within the ethnographic tradition (see Scourfield, 2003; White, Hall and Peckover, 2009; Broadhurst *et al*, 2010). Although ethnography has the potential of gaining profound awareness of practices observed from inside, it has some limitations. It is worth remembering that ethnographic studies focus on reflecting what the participants experience from their own perspective, which although informative, might be problematic within a constructionist perspective that systematically questions notions of 'natural reality' (Silverman, 2011), particularly as what is sought is to explore and analyse in more depth what lies behind overt views. This has been found problematic. The empirical literature revealed one key issue in CP was the discourse embedded in policies and practices, an exploration not necessarily fully accomplished by ethnography. Also, the researcher's positionality is a constant issue in ethnographic research, and this has an impact on data collection and analysis (Buscatto, 2016). Even though, this is an issue implicated in any method, as discussed below.

An exploration of discourses requires stepping in and out in order to see a fuller and wider picture. As such, this research is not involved in capturing personal meanings, although this is included, but within a perspective of such meanings as social practices (Fairclough,

2003) or collective constructions. It is also concerned with exploring the links with cultural constructions, embedded in the macro- social level. Thus, this approach is aimed at exploring the discourses that come from above and, in turn, impact on professional knowledge and practices in the form of underlying discourses and beliefs that, being social practices (Fairclough, 2015) underpin professional practices.

4.4. Epistemological standpoint

This standpoint involves a reflection of the nature of knowledge. As this research tries to use a closer lens, without losing perspective of the wider context of the culture and not only the micro-culture of CP, I assume a position of observation without intervening as a participant. This is different from claiming objectivity. Social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) has revealed that constructions are highly influential in the ways we interpret reality, shaping our understandings in a selective process of knowledge legitimisation (Healy, 2014). Applied to the topic studied here, social problems, like the cases in CP work are discursively constructed. Within professional practices, such constructions are often informed by the specific frameworks for practice, organisational guidelines but also by individual and collective constructions reflected in *professional knowledge*. This *knowledge* shapes practice and the type of frameworks privileged in the specific discourses build on it, with issues of power often implicated in its use by professionals through language use (Peckover, 2014). This specific language use is key in the study of discourse (Fairclough, 2003) as it constitutes the vehicle for social practices to become legitimised in the organisational culture.

Discourses inform practices and are reproduced within them, where values are played out. This is line with Parton's (1991, p. 3) notion of discourses as 'structures of knowledge'. Those structures of knowledge need to be explored to understand what is informing them and the implications for interventions.

4.5. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA is identified as a particular school in Discourse Studies that offers a methodology to study social issues. Woodak and Meyer (2009) suggest its interdisciplinary and eclectic approach, aimed at revealing ideologies and power relations through research. The nature of this study is best accomplished by CDA. This is a methodological and epistemological standpoint based on social constructionism that avoids taken truth for granted as it sees the active construction of reality through language (Fairclough, 2015). As such, the

facts of the cases are filtered through that construction, which is the focus of the analysis and not whether approaches to practice were right or wrong, as there cannot be an assessment of the coherence with of the factual reality that is constructed.

Although the analysis of power, knowledge and ideology has been associated with the development of Foucaldian discourse analysis, I have opted not to follow this approach. Foucaldian discourse analysis has been pivotal in the development of the post- structuralist school. Post-structuralism, following the legacies of Foucault's analysis of discourse, has focussed on the understanding of gender from the perspective of power relations as constructed and reproduced in language, highlighting the influence of subjectivities (Weedon, 1997). Power is conceptualised as not determined only by institutional domains but by individual discourses and social interactions, more than by given structures of oppression, an issue that has been found problematic in Foucault' s analysis and post-structural theory. The disregard of structural aspects has been reflected in some debates. It may be argued that 'post-discourse' that assumes the changing patterns in contemporary contexts, disregard the structural sources of power. Structures of inequality and colonialist dispositives continue operating, as decolonial scholars assert (Mignolo, 2010, Quijano, 2000). The 'post' discourse or claim is still debatable, despite widespread scholarly engagement. Their claims are highly embedded in Western culture and developed societies. This is not best suited for an analysis of a context where the structural is as important as the symbolic in reproducing power and inequality. As I explained in chapter one, I do not set this research within that framework as this study has a firmly decolonial bent, and from that position assumes the nature of colonialism as still structural in the material inequalities and racial division set out by it as not overcome. My position is Marxist and departing from that epistemological position I decided to follow Fairclough's approach to CDA, which he calls an interrelational approach (Fairclough, 2010), where an intersectional lens is compatible.

Within a Marxist framework, Fairclough's conceptualisation of ideology relates to power and domination that looks at power exercised by the State on behalf of a dominant class (1995, p. 17). This differs from Foucault's notion of discourse that locates power as diffuse in everyday interactions. Fairclough (2003) has introduced a focus on the use of language as a social practice, establishing that semiotic elements must be analysed in connection within the social structures and relations, where these elements acquire meaning. For Fairclough this necessarily refers to a dialectical and relational approach to discourse that takes language not only from a linguistic perspective. In this relational approach to CDA, Fairclough (2003) has described the key dimensions or levels to situating discourse analysis,

where the analysis of text is a part of the interpretive process. He distinguishes the social conditions of production and the social conditions of interpretation. Both these type of conditions shapes what people bring to the production and interpretation processes. This includes their representations, values, beliefs, assumptions, etc. These social conditions operate at three levels (Fairclough, 1989, p.25):

- the social situation in which the discourse occurs.
- The level of the social institution
- The wider level of society as a whole

They are all related and in interaction. As well explained by Fairclough:

> *All forms of fellowship, community and solidarity depend upon meanings which are shared and can be taken as given, and no form of social communication or interaction is conceivable without some such 'common ground'. On the other hand, the capacity to shape to some significant degree the nature and the content of this common ground, which makes implicitness an important issue with respect to ideology.* (Fairclough:2003, p.55)

In this research, the cultural dimension is of particular interest in the exploration of dominant discourses. The literature has shed light on the influence of culture on attitudes and values, and a factor relevant to consider the shaping, contestation and implementation of policies and its materialisation into professional practices. The literature has also informed the role of ideology becoming expressed in these practices. CDA is particularly concerned with the deconstruction of ideology and power relations enacted to present particular constructions as common sense. This is how culture manifests itself, functioning as shared knowledge and as a source of identity for a given group. There is where social practices materialise within language (Taylor, 2013), being this a source for CDA. Van Dijk (2009), one of the pioneers of CDA, emphasises the interaction of cognition as mental individual models and social cognition, namely, social representations (values, attitudes, ideologies and knowledge) that are shared by groups. In this approach, social representations have an influence on the construction of personal models or cognitions that become discourses. From that perspective, socially constructed beliefs become assumed as personal beliefs as they become embedded in individuals forming part of a culture.

While there are other perspectives in the study of discourses, they are less concerned with power relations. For instance, discursive psychology (Potter and Whetherell, 1987),

which focuses more on language in the way *interpretive repertoires* serve certain functions within the shaping of discourse. However, as gender involves relations of power materialised in inequalities reproduced by the social order I am not comfortable with such analysis that omits this important aspect. It is still close to cognitive psychology, which centres around individual agency rather than social practices (Taylor, 2013).

4.5.1. A case for CDA in CP policy and practice

There is a body of research that has applied CDA within the field of CP and welfare (see Schmid, 2011; Satka and Skelhill, 2011). Skehill *et al*., (2012) after researching in CP settings define specific paths for analysing discourses within CP, highlighting the relevance of including not only the micro level of practices developed but also the macro level. The latter is related to the wider framework that sets the institutional and organisational culture that impact upon practices and discourses. Thus, at the macro level, the organisational framework is identified in written documents such as regulations and organisations' guidelines, which are a valuable source of analysis. At the micro level, the analysis of case files can contribute to illuminating about practices carried out in particular settings as these documents have the potential of revealing patterns and language that may appear as dominant, precisely what CDA seeks to explore. This was the strategy followed by Skehill et al. (2012) in a historical discourse analysis of case files in Northern Ireland and Schmid, (2011) in South Africa. However, the few studies applying CDA to the CP and welfare system have been more concerned with overarching frameworks. The only study addressing gender is Azzopardi's (2015) research on the failure to protect discourse, mentioned in the empirical literature. Although still limited, research in CP practices has started to move from ethnography to more interpretive approaches, such as CDA.

4.6. Research design

This is a qualitative study, as an in-depth understanding is required rather than identification or measurement (Silverman, 2014), as it does not seek to be representative. Regarding the type of design, it is a multiple cases study (Creswell, 2013), offering the advantage of contrasting different cases, which means different organisations and teams to explore whether patterns are found. As the focus of data sought is on discourses reflected in oral and written texts, the research methods for data collection combine the use of secondary data, represented by organisations' documents (guidelines and case files) with primary data in the form of semi-structured interviews and field notes (Mella, 2016).

4.6.1. Sample and getting access: the crucial step

As explained in chapter two, SENAME has been subject to significant criticism, coming under closer scrutiny within public policies in Chile. My research journey began with concerns regarding access, as at the time I undertook my fieldwork SENAME was at the centre of national debate following the death of a child in residential care, which had a prominent profile in the press and public opinion.

As Chile is a highly centralised country regarding decision-making, my first step was to approach the National office of SENAME to get formal permission. I had previously established contact via e- mail and prepared a letter for the head of the service, which I handed in at the interview. I had to wait for an answer before moving to data collection while approaching the teams that would collaborate. Fearing that the research could be blocked in view of the emergent criticism of the service I had started to think of alternative routes to the files (Courts) when a positive answer finally arrived.

4.6.2. Sampling and recruitment

With formal authorisation, I could organise the schedule of work with the teams. The sample was purposive, having in mind two teams in my design, a third team was offered by a known practitioner that helped me during this phase. The three organisations are representative of two types of programs run by SENAME. Two of them follow policies aimed at prevention and brief intervention with families of children referred, described in chapter two (see pp.19-20). The third team is a programme that belongs to services labelled as specialised interventions. The sample was of convenience as I decided to seek collaboration based in the region of Chile where the research seemed more feasible, where I had previous working experience within the field, with the advantage of having a network available to support my project.

Once granted permission and before starting the fieldwork, I organised meetings with team leaders and the teams invited to participate to agree a schedule of work. Within the context of these meetings, I provided each participant with a summary of the research project for them to be clear about the aims and implications of the study proposed, outlining what their participation would involve, as seen in the participant information sheet (see appendix 3).

4.6.3. The pilot study

While negotiating access and work schedule with the teams, I conducted a small pilot study to test data collection instruments. One of the organisations involved in the research granted me access to another team that collaborated in this stage. This involved the review of four case files along with the procedural guidelines and two interviews with practitioners. This allowed me to adjust the instruments while having some initial insights as to organisational conditions faced by the teams under the latest SENAME guidelines.

4.6.4. The final sample

As mentioned, three child CP organisations collaborated with this research and allowed access to the sample, which is composed of:

1. 3 documents of procedural/framework guidelines in each participant team.
2. 18 case files, 6 per CP team.
3. 13 interviews with practitioners.

The sociodemographics of cases is provided in Appendix 1. The sociodemographics of practitioners interviewed is in table 1 below.

Table 1. The practitioners' sociodemographic: professional expertise, gender and ages

Practitioners	**Female**		**Male**	
	25-35 years old	35 and over	25-35	35 and over
Social workers	3	2	1	1
Psychologists	1		1	1
Psychoeducators	1	1	1	
Total	5	3	3	2

4.7. Data collection process

The data collection process was conducted in three months, by recording information on the site in allocated spaces. There were two main phases to distinguish, planned as sequential. The process is detailed as follows:

4.7.1. First stage: Review of documents and case files

Following meetings with team leaders and in two cases with teams and after informed consent was duly given by all the participants, the first activity was to start the work within the work offices to review the documents and cases. Firstly, the framework procedural guidelines that each organisation had available. These detailed services' users profiles, the staff requirements, and the practices' models and theoretical approaches guiding practices.

4.7.2. Review and recording of case files.

The second review was the 18 case files, 6 per participant organisations. Team leaders were asked to select the cases files according to criteria of low to medium and medium to high complexity cases (as set out in criteria from SENAME guidelines described in chapter two). Unfortunately, teams did not have the time to identify and select cases and instead I was given access to stored cases files to select by myself. This was, of course, done following informed consent granted and ensuring the anonymisation of the data.

For the selection of cases, I considered key conditions.

- Cases with a minimum of six months of intervention and having been closed for at least two months before the start of the review.
- Cases where at least two reports have been sent for Court proceedings.

While reviewing the first cases I became aware of the high rates of staff turnover. In some cases selected for the sample, the practitioners involved were no longer in the teams. According to that and, as the data collected from the documents was meant to be complemented by interviews with the professional handling the cases, I added the condition of their availability within the teams for the selection of cases.

4.7.3. The recording process

Prior to accessing the sites and during the pilot, I decided on the information to be recorded and designed a word document with a table of contents fit for that purpose (see appendix 4) I used this template to build cases' profiles of the sociodemographic data, along with extracts of case files notes and reports.

The recording of the information was intended to build a story of each family intervention carried out. Two types of accounts were recorded. One column for the reports found that had been sent to the Courts involved. Another was the internal case files notes. A

particular focus was put on Court reports. These were the construction made to an audience intended to influence decision making and assessments and interventions with families to examine discourses displayed, by looking at the language and concepts emerging as dominant across this data.

Once on site, the impossibility of recording everything became clear, given that the review needed to be done on site and photocopying was not allowed and ethically complex. As the research was focussed on constructions in relation to mothers and fathers or carers, the main source of data came from the accounts related to family interventions, mainly carried out by social workers and only occasionally by psychoeducators and psychologists.

The recordings focussed on quoting and copying sections of Court reports found on the case files and then a selection of recordings of the intervention process such as visits, interviews with family members, family meetings, meetings with other agencies involved or participation in Court proceedings. Anonymous information from case files was collated over a period of ten weeks, in situ, as seen in examples in appendix 6.

4.7.4. The advantages and pitfalls of research using case files

Case files have been widely used in social work research, as the literature review shows. Significant for this research is Swift's (1995) study into Canadian child welfare system, a critical analysis of the construction of neglect. Through a Marxist critical approach, she set the 'dynamic interconnectedness between individuals and their social context' as a good example of the potential of examining practitioners' accounts in the form of case files records. This captures reality construction and how discourse becomes a vehicle for ideology to be enacted as files are products of this organisational culture (Parton *et al*, 1997). They reflect its preoccupations and its dominant features. However, as Silverman (2011) states, they are not a simple record of events but are constructed for an audience in a specific way.

As Skehill *et al.* (2012, p.64) state, case files records contain a story of CP practices that reflect institutional language. As such, they are a valuable source of information in the study of practices, as they provide the story as constructed by practitioners, which is what this research seeks to explore. However, their limitations must be acknowledged. They are not always accurate accounts (Garfinkel, 1992). Time workloads prevent practitioners from systematically recording events and accounts. However, partial and uncompleted accounts, case files recordings tell the story of the kind of events and reports practitioners select to record. Not treated as absolute truth but rather the construction of it is what this research is

pursuing, the version that has become available as the valid account, regardless of its accuracy, but rather treated as a discourse.

In this research, there was a varied type of case files across the three teams, ones well documented with very long accounts, detailed, while others which were not as accurate or complete. Practitioners themselves often noted that 'not everything is on the case files', given the considerable burden they experience. Thus, interviewing them on a second stage about those cases reviewed was important to have a complete account to rely on and reflect on their perspectives in retrospective as the cases selected were closed or about to close.

4.7.5. Second stage: Interviews with practitioners

In this second stage, after recording all the information needed to build cases, interviews were conducted with the practitioners involved in the case files reviewed. This was considered as a method of triangulation and to complete what was missing from the case files, resulting in a suitable method of filling gaps in the stories of the cases.

These interviews followed a general schedule or topic guide (see appendix 5), but specific questions set for each interviewee were included regarding information on specific cases handled. As such, interviews were adapted according to the different issues emerging.

I was able to interview 13 practitioners. The interviews were carried out in the team's offices, in private and lasted between 50 and 80 minutes. These interviews were voice recorded (consent granted, see appendix 3) and transcribed for analysis.The content addressed key issues involved in professional practices identified in the review of written documents to explore in depth their main approaches and understandings and the ways they have come to decisions. Although I have focussed on the accounts of the family intervention, I also wanted to interview the other member of the dyad when available, as in the reports and the internal analysis they work closely, and the interview was a space to explore how shared meanings and constructions regarding the cases were made.

The rationale behind using not only documents but also interviews is found in the need to go further with practitioner's discourses, but also as a method of triangulation, having both types of discourse the written text and the verbal account and giving the opportunity to practitioners to make their case retrospectively in the verbal account when looking back at particular cases and interventions, especially when the case file was incomplete and/or inaccurate.

4.7.6. Field notes

I did take some notes of my observations during fieldwork. Insights were emerging while in the field, listening to conversations and reading the documents as well as participating in some daily routines. The organisational culture of each team was an issue seen from my position, with different experiences across the three organisations, ranging from more collaborative and enthusiastic with the research to more suspicious and less engaged in others. I realised this reflected organisational dynamic.

4.8. Approach to data analysis: integrating methods

Making sense of the data was a challenge given the amount of information that was collected. To accomplish the task of conducting CDA, I had to make the data manageable. I was intending to use NVivo software to help me with the organisation, but I had concerns as I felt I needed to work with the accounts in context rather than treat them by chunks through the software assisted coding and categorisation. My key concern was paying attention to language use in context while searching for patterns. As I was trying to make sense of case files, I felt I had to go through them as it is in routine practices, chronologically, to build the story. As a result of these concerns, although I did use Nvivo, the analysis was mainly manually conducted. It involved constructing the summaries of the cases, translating, searching for patterns and language through the elaboration of these stories. This was done by looking at the internal recordings and the reports sent to Court, which revealed the kind of constructions practitioners tended to make (see appendix 6).

For instance, it was by constructing the summaries and translation that I had an insight regarding translation. Within this task, aimed at making data intelligible for an English-speaking audience in this thesis, I had started to translate ‘marental’ (see chapter two) as ‘maternal’ until the point I realised I was not doing justice to the data by overlooking this issue with language use, which resulted in a finding, playing a role regarding discourses. As this research is concerned with the use of language in constructing reality, in the interest of rigour, I have remained faithful to the word that practitioners were using in their native language. It has no direct English equivalent, as it is a neologism, specific to its context, as explained in chapter two.

4.8.1. Analytic strategies: From thematic to CDA and the intersectional lens

A strategy was to prepare a data corpus for a first analysis, which was a thematic analysis. This allowed me to identify dominant themes that led to identifying discourses

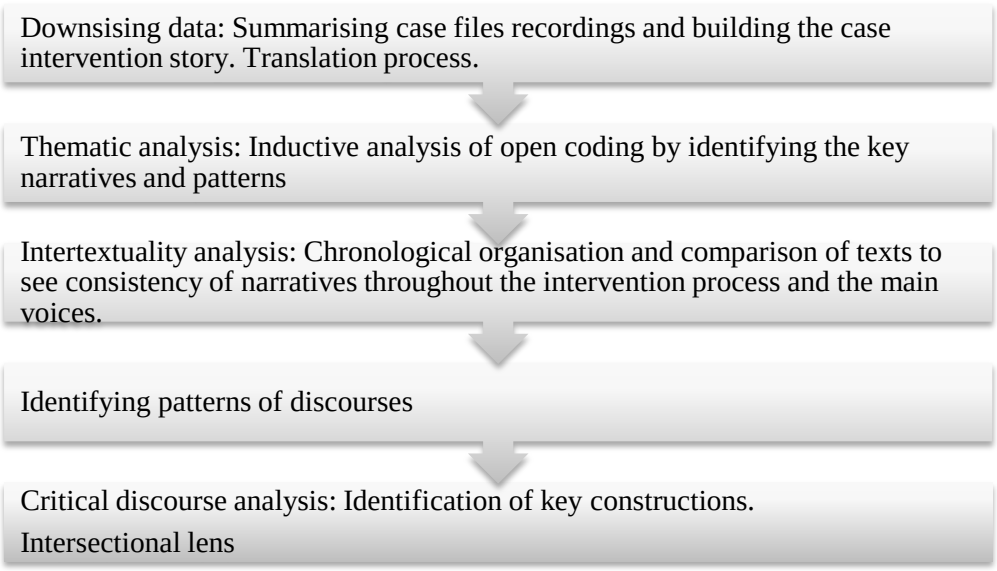
surrounding practices.The analysis was conducted inductively as CDA tries to capture people's social constructions and assumptions, the task being not to apply categories to participants' narratives but to identify the type of categories they employ (Wood and Kroger, 2000) as it has been stated that people use categories to interpret reality (Potter and Whetherell, 1987).

The inductive analysis started with a descriptive labelling of categories to move to a more deductive process of extracting meanings across the narratives, moving from more semantic to latent meanings discovered (Clarke and Braun, 2016). Thus, it led to the themes identified, which, in turn, led to subthemes organised around concepts or narratives identified. Then, I compared the cases searching for the patterns and common themes, which led me to organise the preliminary findings, which I later checked to confirm the accuracy by going back to the original data set.

Thematic analysis and CDA relate well in their search for patterns and the interpretive nature. It was the thematic analysis that provided the ground to see which constructions were dominant. Moving from identifying these patterns allowed the examination of the ideological underpinnings examined with CDA.

During the second moment, there was a second analysis based on intertextuality, within the CDA method as proposed by Fairclough (2003) and detailed below. Also, given the results coming from thematic analysis and, as already discussed in relation to the decolonial approach of this research, the analysis also needed to incorporate an intersectional lens. This emerged from the need to account for local variations that reflect on the issues affecting Mapuche families in the sample (see chapter 6). Intersectional analysis, as per decolonial thinking, is preoccupied with epistemologies and ontologies in the quest for overcoming single axis categorisations, acknowledging the diversity of experiencies of power relations according to different source of identity (see chapter 3). The steps in the analysis are oulined below.

4.8.2. Analytical process



4.8.3. CDA framework for this research

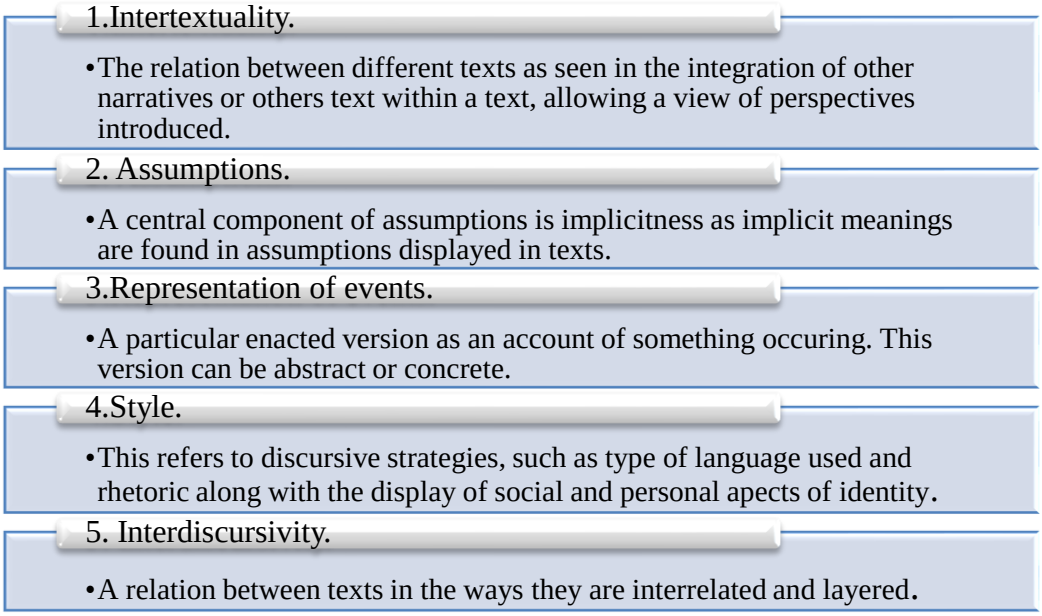
As recognised in the methodological literature, there is not a single or standard procedure with which to conduct discourse analysis (Coyle, 2016, Wetherell and Potter, 1992) and approaches vary from sociolinguistic to social research and also the discursive psychology approach. Coyle (2016) says that rather than a rigorous methodology what is key is the careful reading and interpretation based on linguistic evidence, which means the use of language, as it functions to actively construct reality and legitimate versions of events (Coyle, p. 173). To conduct the analysis, I took Fairclough 's (1995) analytical framework of textual analysis, a three-dimensional framework. For him, discourses have three dimensions:

1. Text (spoken or written language)
2. Discourse practice (production and interpretation of text)
3. Social practice.

As he has explained:

> *The connection between text and social practice is seen as being mediated by discourse practice:on the one hand, processes of text production and interpretation are shaped by (and help shape) the nature of the social practice, and on the other hand the production process shapes (and leaves 'traces' in) the text , and the interpretative process operates upon 'cues' in the text. The analysis of text is form-and -meaning analysis-I formulate it in this way to stress their necessary interdependency* (Fairclough, 1995, p.133)

Fairclough has set up specific textual elements to operationalise the analytical process, which are detailed below:



Of these elements to frame the analysis, I was particularly engaged with the first three (Intertextuality, assumptions, and the representation of events). Intertextuality in particular was key in guiding both the data corpus building and their analysis. Intertextuality as the links between documents to construct social realities (Flick, 2014) shows how different voices and perspectives are brought into the text, and the extent that some struggles occur in different opinions played out (Hood, 2016). Intertextuality was relevant to build this data corpus by having these two sets of accounts: the internal recordings practitioners had on the case files and the court reports sent, given these are for different audiences. Internal recordings are a routine requirement for practitioners to show their dalily work with each case, often reviewed by a supervisor from SENAME and other colleagues. It functions like a diary of the case where the key moments can be identified, but also the practitioners' tone in reflecting on the case. The Court report is the main official account provided as the audience is the judges deciding on the case, where professional opinion and suggestions are displayed and where the construction on the case made through the recordings is to be seen. Intertextuality as part of the CDA method supported by Fairclough (2003) provides a guide to look at the relationship between these documents or accounts, to see whose voices are represented and their influence on the construction of discourse, reflected in what is selected to be reported and what is not. This is important to examine the active construction practitioners make on cases and what influence is wielved to proceed with the analysis. As

CP intervention follows certain phases (initial stage, which is the referral, diagnosis and setting up the intervention plan, ending stage) it is important to see the whole process of building the construction of the case as made through these different phases. This is illustrated in Fig. 3 below, which describes the framework I adopted to conduct the intertextuality analysis, considering the stages of the CP route.

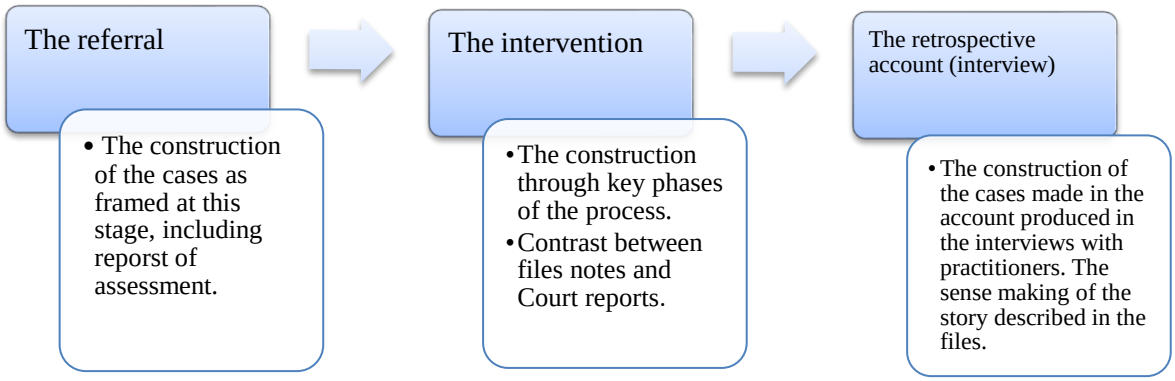


Fig.3. Intertextuality analysis framework

This analysis responded to key questions posed for the analysis of constructions:

1. How the case was constructed in the referral? (previous reports, Courts' referrals, labels)
2. How the case was constructed by the practitioners along the process of intervention? (What is found on Court reports and on internal recordings? Consistency? What is selected to be reported to the Courts? Is there anything missing?
3. How the case ended up constructed (in the interview)?

This analysis informed central issues to observe constructions as dominant:

- What was influencing the construction of the cases?
- Whose voices are considered to construct the cases?
- How gender is involved across the constructions?
- Differences due to staff turnover? Competing discourses?
- Consistency. What is found on Court reports and on internal recordings? What was selected to be reported?

In this analysis another two elements were also key to arrive at findings: the representation of events, the ways practitioners reported cases and, then, linked to that what

Fairclough has analysed as key in the building of discourses, which is implicitness. Within the implicitness as a property of texts, central is the impact of assumptions. As well explained by Fairclough: (2003, p.55):

> *Implicitness is a pervasive property of texts and a property of considerable social importance. All forms of fellowship, community and solidarity depend upon meanings which are shared and can be taken as given, and no form of social communication or interaction is conceivable without some such 'common ground'* (Fairclough (2003, p.55).

Fairclough distinguishes three main types of assumptions:

> 1.*The existential assumptions: assumptions about what exists or reality*
> *2.Propositional assumptions: assumptions about what is or can be or will be the case*
> *3.Value assumptions: assumptions about what is good or desirable*. (Fairclough (2003, p.55)

The constructions found in this research are compatible with this operationalisation, particularly regarding the enactment of values that permeated the approaches to parents, as it will be discussed in the following chapters. The analysis of implicitness and its materialisation through assumptions allowed a shared language that built the common-sense truths to be discerned, which ostensibly guides professional practices.

4.9. Ethical considerations

This research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the School for Policy Studies at the University of Bristol. Ethics was addressed in a number of issues as it involved human subjects, on sensitive issues in vulnerable people (Ali and Kelly, 2012).

Before conducting research, practitioners involved in cases reviewed received complete information on the nature of the research provided in a summary of its aims (see appendix 3) and had access to the Ethics committee approval document for the research to be conducted. They were clearly informed of their right to withdraw from the project. Notwhistanding, the use of case files when it is not possible and/or potentially not ethical to request informed consent from services users raises a number of ethical issues. However, as a practitioner myself, with previous professional access to such files, both the REC and

SENAME approved the research on the understanding that only anonymised data was removed from CP offices. Other benefits of the research to outweigh this risk are balanced by the research standpoint of searching for practitioners' constructions of cases, not the personal lives of the services users, but the treatment given in the institutional settings.

Personal and organisational identities have been protected, by omitting details and identifying teams with numbers as well as practitioners. For instance, when reporting the findings, participanting teams are named Team 1, Team 2 and Team 3. The same is applied to the practitioners which are identified by their discipline (Social worker, Psychologist or Psychoeducator) followed by a number eg. Social worker 2, T2, ect. to ensure that the research addresses the possible outcomes for those involved. All the personal and organisational identification has been anonymised and was securely stored whilst being collected and analysed.

4.9.1. Reflexivity as a researcher using CDA and validity

Departing from social constructionism as an epistemological position, I must acknowledge that what I present here is itself a construction of the data. There is always the possibility of another researcher arriving at different points or highlighting other issues. Having said that, one claim is that value-free research has been discussed as difficult to ensure (Wood and Kroger, 2000).

CDA has been placed as a method committed to reveal inequality and power relations (Fairclough, 2015, Van Leeuwen, 2018). In the quest for revealing legitimation of these powers through discourse, the commitment to be critical in CDA (Fairclough, 2003, Van Dijk, 1993) might be problematic, or seen as unfair to people involved in this study. The researcher's positionality as judging what is wrong also involves a reflection on this. Being aware of the dangers of partisan analysis, it is important to clarify this research is intended at exploring discourses in action, not blaming individuals. I depart from the perspective they are part of a wider network of social practices that reproduces historically and culturally embedded discourses.

Regarding validity, during the analytical journey, I tried to introduce a balance to avoid over-interpretation. I did what I could to introduce the rigour of checking my findings and conclusions after analysis. Even at the latest stages of writing, I went back to the original raw data to check that what I constructed was there. I took advantage of some specific tools of NVivo software, which provided me with information regarding the most cited words in the texts, as a form of content analysis to check how dominant and widespread the narratives

I identified were. Although not included as part of the analytical framework, given the constructionist and interpretive nature I undertook, as suggested in the methodological literature, quantifying of words and narratives in qualitative research serves to check the validity of findings (Silverman, 2013). In this research, the evidence for the themes and narratives turned to be fairly consistent. Thus, preoccupation with rigour has been introduced in my approach to analysis, although acknowledging this account will always be my constructed version.

The findings emerging from the methodological approach outlined here are shown in the three following chapters. They present the thematic, intersectional and CDA analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

Thematic analysis I: The construction of women and men as parents: what does gender have to do with parenting?

5.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out the first part of the findings of the thematic analysis conducted. This is predominantly based on the case files reviewed, but funtions in triangulation with the interviews with practitioners. From these two sources, dominant narratives (themes) are identified in the practitioners' accounts. The focus of the chapter is to discuss the ways gendered constructions were displayed in these narratives.

The chapter has four sections. After a characterisation of the types of families involved, in order to provide a context for the analysis, the emergent themes are outlined. The first section is organised around the dominance of references to the mothers' role, articulated through expectations observed. The second section shows how these expectations, posed as different in relation to men, were reflected in the practices, legitimising the control over women's life compared to the extent this happened with men. The third section reveals how this control is developed through a differentiated visibility of women and men's histories in the practitioners 'descriptions, with the result of rendering men's histories and violent or inappropriate behavior invisible. The fourth section discusses a gendering process involved in the dynamics of gender relationships observed by practitioners in the interactions with services' users, who assumed a gendered positionality impacting upon the constructions made.

5.2. Contextualising the analysis: Families sample characterisation

Before detailing the findings, it is necessary to contextualise the respective cases' profiles. The sample, as explained in chapter four, is composed of eighteen case files coming from three different teams, and thirteen interviews. The socio-demographic profile of cases is provided elsewhere (see appendix 1). Table 2 shows the types of families and their ethnic belonging to map the family arrangements and understand some of the issues deemed relevant to the interventions developed. Information on engagement is added to contextualise some of the findings.

Table 2. Types of family, ethnicity and engagement

Families type	**Mapuche**	**Non-mapuche**	**Mapuche/non-mapuche**	**Engagement**		**Total**
				Mothers	Fathers/Male carers	
Nuclear families	4	2	1	7	4	**7**
Separated families		7		7	2	**7**
Single parent/ carers	3			2	1	**3**
Reconstituted families		1		2		**1**
Total	**7**	**10**	**1**	**18**	**7**	

From seven separated families, four mothers were in partner relationships, whereby their partners were not systematically considered to be part of the interventions. There were two cases where the birth father was absent. Regarding strategies and the engagement of parents, there was an engagement of men in seven cases, with varying degrees of involvement. From these, four fathers were in the nuclear family. From the other three men engaged, only one was consistent in participation. In all the cases, the mother was the main participating parent in the intervention and the strategies adopted focussed more on them, as described below and summarised in appendix 2. There was one case with a single male carer, in the absence of the birth parents. The reasons for referrals included neglect, cases of physical and sexual abuse. In nine cases men were the main perpetrators of harm, with four cases labelled as neglect by both parents, and four identified as maternal neglect (see appendix 1 and 2).

The themes and subthemes identified in the practitioners' narratives following the analytical framework described in chapter four are outlined below. They will be developed throughout this chapter.

Themes and subthemes identified

1. Fulfilment of the marental role. -The role as mothers first -Mothers'attachment and empathy -Mothers'protectiveness.
2. Expectations of mothers -Mothers expected to postpone themselves. -The scrutiny of mothers -Women as victims: invisible or instrumental.
3. Men' histories and violence: the invisibility.
4. Gender relations and positioning.

While other themes related to organisational issues and fragmentation across services were observed they go beyond the scope of this thesis, although some of them are integrated to the analysis in different chapters, being part of potential further research.

5.3. Fulfilment of the marental role

One theme emerging as a dominant category employed by the practitioners is the *marental role* (see chapter two) and its fulfilment. This was recurrently used in descriptions regarding the parenting of mothers. In twelve of the eighteen total case files, the concept was used, being consistently represented across the three teams. As explained in chapter two, the marental role is understood as the parenting role of mothers, which has been introduced in CP work in Chile over the last decade, following Barudy y Dantagnan's (2005, 2010) assessment guide. In the data it was widely used as a category at the assessment and intervention level. These included the referrals and the processes of assessment requested by the Family courts at this stage. This means the assessment teams playing a role and influencing the Family Courts in the referrals to intervention teams approached (see figure 2, chapter 2). They were all employing the concept, which was consistently more prevalent than in references to the paternal role. This focus was reflected in a set of expectations identified as themes described here as part of the assessment of the *fulfilment of the marental role*.

One example is case 04, from team 2. In this case, the Court order seen in the file stated the process started with the mother reporting their children (of 4 and 2 years of age) as

missing from home one day. They were later found at the paternal grandparents' home, located nearby, this being a familiar place for the children who had grown up there in the early years as a family unit. In the current scenario, the parents were separated for some time, and in a conflictive relationship (as described in the case file), with the children under the care of the mother, who used to visit the grandparents regularly. Following the report, the Family court ordered an assessment, culminating with the intervention process recommended to the Court. Within this assessment, there was a marental capacity assessment requested before deciding the intervention. This report offered the following account of the mother:

> "Whilst she is collaborative, she is centred upon validating her maternal role, and blaming the paternal family. She is displaying a *dysfunctional parenting as important deficiency are found in her marental role*, revealing *undermined attachment and empathy* that had ended in this referral" (assessment team, marental capacity assessment, emphasis added).

The referral is then, underpinned by a construction of the mother's responsibility due to her lack of care towards the children, with a conclusion of 'important deficiencies in her *marental* role'. Although later in the same report (not reproduced here) it was stated that there was 'neglect by both parents, with permanent conflict in their relationship', the suggested intervention emphasised more the work to be carried out with the mother rather than the father. Despite the assessment's suggestion he should be part of the intervention; no clear objectives were set in the intervention plan to achieve this. Indeed, no record of any encounter with him was found. In the parenting capacity assessment, he was found needing psychological treatment for his lack of control, while mentioning 'his machista views and his distant position regarding the children'. However, as he was not engaged, these issues were left unaddressed.

Team 2 started the intervention, as ordered by the Court, with the intervention plan keeping the focus on the mother, as seen in the first report sent to the Family court:

> "(…) A family objective to achieve is promoting in the *mother* the exercise of a normative system according to the development of the children. This is in progress, with work aimed at teaching the mother *to improve the failures observed in her marental role* as well as communication in the family. The parents remain separated and the father maintains monthly contact with the children as he works in another city. Economically, they rely on the father's income. The mother is searching for a job (…) Despite these difficulties, the children's

> wellbeing is guaranteed. There have been reports of the mother's neglect, but she has displayed strategies to deal with the current situation and no risks are observed." (social worker and psychoeducator, Team 2, Court report 1, emphasis added).

This case was a brief intervention lasting seven months, as no further concerns were found. However, the construction around the fulfilment of the marental role was kept, as seen in the final report to the Court:

> The professional opinion is that the past failures have been overcome, giving room for an adequate normative system and appropriate caring, which was possible in the process of *instructing the mother, following the recognition of her failures* (social worker and psychoeducator, case 04, team 2, court report 2, emphasis added).

Consistent was the construction of the mother as needing to be taught to improve her 'failures in the *marental* role'. However, the file notes reviewed did not show evidence to support this claim as no concerns were reported. There was only mention over the discipline with the children, clearly stating the reports of mother's neglect being dismissed. However, as the case was constructed within the framing of *marental failures*, this appeared to be shaping the intervention by focussing on monitoring the mother's parenting. The role of the father appeared of little concern. In the interview with the practitioner, she confirmed he was never seen during the intervention period due to his unavailability for work-related reasons. However, he was constructed in positive terms despite objective evidence of failures (such as not paying food allowance, despite having a job or passing on the responsibility for the children to his parents). He seemed excused for not being more engaged and geographically closer as his role is not constructed as being as relevant as the role of the mother. This role was expected to be 'appropriate', given the perceived failures in the marental role, matching the construction made on the referral.

This example illustrates a pattern found regarding practitioners consistently maintaining a focus on the maternal performance, constructed as *the display of the marental role* as more salient when assessing the well-being of children. This assessment was rarely described for fathers, despite cases where failures were found. The fulfilment of the marental role was found underpinned by the sub-themes developed below.

5.3.1. The role as mothers first

Integral to the emphasis on the *marental* role and its fulfilment there was a recurrent exhortation of putting the role as a mother first. This narrative was found as part of intervention strategies emphasising what practitioners seemed to understand as women's priorities, as seen below:

> "(…) It is found out that regular attendance at school has been maintained. That reflects the mother's responsibility, who is *reminded* (my emphasis) of this priority as this means *acting as a mother and protecting her children's rights".* (social worker, case file notes, case 03, Team 2, emphasis added).

This case was of a lone Mapuche mother with two children, aged 3 and 5, referred for neglect. The case was referred as recommended by an assessment team based upon a suspicion of alcohol misuse in the indigenous community where the family lived, along with concerns over hygiene and schooling. No concern over the mother's alcohol misuse was ever evidenced. Regarding the concern over schooling this was not yet compulsory for the children's age, which in Chile is from 6 onwards. Before that age, there is an optional system of nursery they can attend from the age of 4. On the other hand, this case was of a Mapuche family living in a rural area, with less access to services and educational facilities, issues that seemed overlooked in the assessment. The way the role as a mother is emphasised provides a view of the expectations set.

A similar assessment was observed in a different team expressing:

> "The objective of the session changed as the mother seemed very distressed due to the couple's conflicts. She complained about her partner's passive attitude within the relationship. Some advice is given regarding this, *reminding* her of *her role as mother and the need to focus on that*. She is told to focus on her daughter, and *the interests of all her children before her own."* (social worker, case file notes in case 01, Team 3, emphasis added).

In these two examples of encounters with mothers, the practitioners of two different teams, one male and one female respectively, highlighted that these women needed to be *reminded of their role as mothers* and expecting them to act accordingly. This seemed an identity construction they considered vital to stress. Additionally, the fact that in general,

women were mostly mentioned in the accounts as 'the mother', reflect this is the salient identity perceived by the practitioners. As observed in another team:

> "The children are living with *the mother*, who has made progress in her personal development, validating herself as a *maternal figure and as a woman*, becoming more empowered" (social worker and psychologist 1, Court report 4, case 03, Team 3, emphasis added).

For this case, a final report four months later describes the outcomes as:

> "It must be highlighted the engagement of the family with the process of intervention, the mother being committed and motivated, with *progress in her personal development as a mother and a woman.* She has empowered herself by setting some boundaries to her partner as *she is the one leading the raising of the children, preventing the maltreatment*. It is achieved with the mother that *she now sees the importance of her role* and that she is available for the children". (Psychologist 2, Court report 5, team 3, emphasis added)

Despite a change in practitioner due to internal staff turnover, the narrative remained similar, revealing the continuity in the construction following the intervention. As noted in a previous report, the assessment of personal development although including her being *a woman,* in the way it is written denotes a hierarchy that situates *her role as a mother* before *being a woman,* emphasising this identity construction. Secondly, her assessment of being empowered, associated with her development as a woman is linked to her ability to set boundaries with her partner and, within that, protecting the children. This confirms that was the key role she was expected to perform.

5.3.2. Mothers' lack of attachment and empathy

Narratives including emotional style and bond to the children appeared to underpin the assessment of the *marental* role and the identity as a mother. One category widely mentioned by the practitioners is attachment, specifically emphasised for mothers and pointing at a deficit. This emerged to frame women as not conforming to expectations of being empathic and emotionally close towards their children. Under this assessment, they were often regarded as unable to care or neglectful. This is observed, for example, in case 01, in team 2, where the referral is of a report of maternal neglect made by the paternal grandfather against the mother of a 13 years old boy. The report was made to the Family Court, following an incident of corporal punishment perpetrated by the stepfather against the

boy at the home where the reconstituted family lived. The first report sent to the Family Court by the team doing the intervention stated:

> "(...) The mother-child relationship is distant, and not adapted to the child's developmental stage. Mother focussed on own personal interests before her son." (social worker and psychoeducator, court report 1, team 2).

The construction made to the Court is that of the mother's lack of commitment to protecting her son from her partner's maltreatment. The label applied was of maternal neglect. While it was the stepfather who perpetrated the harm by beating the boy, what became the focus of the practitioners was the *mother's failure to protect*. This construction echoed the grandfather's report pointing at the mother's blame for focusing on her own interests and not her son. She then is portrayed as distant and unable to protect. Missing in the report was the practitioners' case files notes regarding the stepfather's 'patriarchal style and rigid normative system'. The main concern presented to the court was the 'mother's lack of empathy' with the boy. This was highlighted on the report and appeared to underpin the decision to take the boy away from the family, with the stepfather's use of violence not central to decision making.

The same narrative was displayed in the handling of a case in Team 1 (case 06). The situation involved parents separating, with each of them looking after one of the two sisters referred for intervention. This followed sexual abuse perpetrated by the father's older son (born from a previous relationship).

In one report sent to the Family Court to inform on the intervention is concluded:

> "(...) Regarding vulnerabilities (…) *the lack of maternal affection is something that needs to be improved.* The youngest girl needs to spend more time with her mother and her sister. It is relevant to promote parental responsibility in improving ties between mother and daughter, with her sister, being too little the time they spent together." (social worker and psychoeducator, case 06, team 1, emphasis added).

In the file, notes of a visit report:

> "The mother must care about the protection of her daughter. She tends to defend and justify her partner. There is a *lack of marental protection and attachment mother-child* with both daughters." (social worker, team 1).

The construction regarding attachment was consistently found to be underpinning the assessment of the mothers' capacity to care and protect and was central to the *marental* role narrative. In this case, despite having both parents available in the intervention, the focus and the concern was constructed around the mother's lack of emotional/caring style. She was labelled as 'non- sympathetic and with rigid norms'. In contrast, the construction of the father was more positive, as reflected on a parenting assessment. While the mother was placed in the 'in concern' category (see chapter two, note 10, pp.21), this was not the case for the father, who was found in 'no concern' category. Something similar was found in a different team (case 05, Team 3). On a court report describing a mother assuming the care of her son after he was beaten by his birth father, the main carer until then, it was reported:

> "(...) There is a *lack of empathy* regarding the emotional needs of the boy, with the mother not seeing the impact of the absence of *her role as a mother* in J.'s history. She is focussed on basic needs, prioritising these over the emotional ones." (Social worker, Court report 1, emphasis added.)

These accounts reflecting the concerns regarding the mothers' attachment seem to echo normative views of women when assessing their bond to children. They seemed expected to be nurturing, caring, loving and empathic. These characteristics were not expected or judged on fathers.

One impact of the marental role narrative being so dominant across the accounts was turning the paternal role less visible and relevant and, as a result, not scrutinised as the mothers' role was. Additionally, it reinforced the construction of accountability as placed on mothers, as shown in the next section.

5.3.3. *Maternal protectiveness versus fathers' unaccountability*

Protectiveness was also constructed as a part of a mother's role as consistently found. In some cases, it was the main concern and goal set for the intervention plans. This was particularly found when domestic violence was involved (eight cases), but also in situations which were referred for neglect and sexual abuse allegations. The expectation regarding mothers' protectiveness was a construction posed not only by the intervention teams but also by the different agencies involved with the cases since a referral was made.

For instance, a case in Team 1 (case 01), where a report was made by a 14 year- old boy's school, following the teacher noticing the boy's face with visible signs of beating. The school's report sent to the Family Court described the situation as:

> "M.(the boy) has been a victim of physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by his father. The mother is who provides protection and safeguarding to the boy and his sisters when violence occurs. The family dynamics are characterised by great dysfunctionality. These aggressive episodes are permanent over time, and despite a previous referral and intervention at the OPD, the family dynamics continue with the violent cycle. This is why this report is made as the boy shows up at the school with visible scars, admitting to the teacher that his father has beaten him, which is, in turn, confirmed by his sister (…).We suggest a restraining order while the father receives treatment from a specialised agency. At the same time, the boy is referred to a programme of serious maltreatment…"
> (Signed by the school psychologist and social worker).

With this new incident, following a previous intervention, a statutory measure was requested to the Court. This time, the family was referred to a CP team (Team 1), expecting the family to be linked to community networks. In the Court order document, the Court stated that the intervention was aimed at:

> "eradicating any form of violence (...) *the mother being commanded* to ensure the schooling of her children and *to understand that she must be a protective factor* for them." (Family Court referral order for case 01, Team 1, emphasis added).

The construction placed the mother as responsible as highlighted in this framing. This order did not include any measure or strategy to deal with the father's violence, as suggested, dismissing the recommendations to do so and vaguely recommending 'the family to be linked to community networks.' Instead, emphasised was the mother as the 'protective factor' to the children. Similarly, the objectives found in the team's intervention plan made no explicit reference to the dynamics of violence and the gender order. Instead, the focus was on 'strengthening parenting skills to promote the integral well-being of the boy referred'. This framing diverted the concern of the issue of violence and the physical abuse to a more neutral and generic issue. What this framing did in this, and other cases reviewed was to make invisible the main issue faced, which was the father's use of violence. Such constructions, shared by the Court and the team, may be analysed as underpinning a no referral decision to a

perpetrators' programme given the responsibility for protection was assigned to the mother. In the final report to the Court, the practitioners informed:

> "During the last stage of the intervention process, the mother and father have improved their parenting capacity, establishing an *appropriate* normative system for their children. The father is showing more flexibility, within the frame of his beliefs regarding children's duties within the family. *The mother is keeping the role of mediator*, having a good influence on the family. Both parents are aware of the consequences and harm following maltreatment.
> Decision making
> The child must continue under the care of *his mother*.
> The intervention process is completed" (Court report, Psychoeducator and Psychologist team 1, emphasis added).

The approach assumed tried to change the father's child-rearing style, found to be authoritarian. Given his resistance to the intervention and rigid style, there was an implicit assumption of the challenges to make changes with him. This found support in framing the problem as his 'cultural background' as Mapuche. Then, what was assumed as left for the practitioners was to rely on the mother's role with expectations regarding her position as a 'mediator*'* within the family. She was, then, expected to keep the situation of violence under control, assigned to the role of caring for her son as made clear in the final suggestion to the Court 'The child must continue under the care of *his mother'* (emphasis added) instead of both parents as equally responsible and accountable. Despite the seriousness of the referral (the boy coming to school with visible scars), this violence was not addressed more systematically with the perpetrator, assuming the protection was on the mother.

In a second similar situation, (case 06, team 3) there was a complex case involving another Mapuche family with domestic violence perpetrated by the father, an alcohol misuser. He was found to be perpetrating physical maltreatment to his 10 years old son. In this case, a restraining order was requested by the team while emphasising the role of the mother in being protective enough, as seen in the last report upon completing the intervention:

> "Objectives have been accomplished as the *mother has understood the importance of being a protective figure for the referred child and his sisters*, being aware of the network available to help with the issue of domestic violence." (social worker and psychologist, Court report).

Similar to the previous case, more than addressing the father's violence, the primary goal was to make the mother accountable for the protection of children. Other cases revealed the same pattern. Mothers were under the pressure of handling the fathers' violence while practitioners rarely addressed the issues with the perpetrators. These were in some cases limited to stopping alcohol misuse, a factor identified in the violence scenarios. No further emphasis on the need to change the gender regimes and make fathers more accountable was found.

There were another two cases where the protective role of mothers was salient. In these two, the outcomes were unfavourable to them as the children were taken away based on the perceived lack of mothers' protectiveness and attachment, while overlooking men's failures. This involved a blaming construction that was applied consistently to the mothers. Underpinning these decisions was a preoccupation with a mother's failure to protect rather than a father's failure to care and protect the children. Fathers/ men were not regarded or constructed as accountable for the harm done as no systematic intervention or measures were put in place in any of the cases to address the issues with them. Evidence in a majority of the cases (11 out of the 18) showed men as fathers or partners were identified as doing harm or putting children at risk. The unequal assignation of accountability was linked to the set of expectations in practitioners' narratives about women/mothers, as shown in the next section.

5.4. Expectations of mothers

The narratives showed how expectations of mothers and fathers were differently constructed, observed as assumptions coming not only from the participant teams' accounts, but the actions and narratives found from other agencies participating in the processes of intervention, such as the Courts, mental health services, schools, and other CP teams. These expectations were found as follows:

5.4.1. Women expected to postpone themselves

Women were most likely to be burdened with sole responsibility to make personal arrangements or accommodate their lifestyles to meet what was perceived as the needs of the children, while being subject to more scrutiny and control over their personal lives, as the following excerpt shows:

> "In an-interview (...) she *is again told of the need to stabilise her condition, due to changes of partners, telling her this is not good for the children as it doesn't help the family development".* (Social worker 1, case 03, team 2, case file notes, emphasis added).

This was often the case in the situation of women in reconstituted families or having partners, where concern over them was an issue, but also manifested as a moral concern regarding women's lifestyles. In another case in team 1 (case 06), of two girls of 13 and 10 years old, referred following their disclosure of being victims of the oldest father's son sexual abuse. This took place while at the father's house as they were under his care since the parents' breakup two years ago as a result of domestic violence. However, after the report, the oldest daughter went to live with her mother and her partner, who the mother had been in a relationship with for a couple of years. The practitioners were concerned about the mother's partner, following information regarding a judicial process he had to undergo on suspicion of sexual abuse towards his biological daughter. The practitioners later confirmed with her (his daughter) that she had lied to protect a partner from whom he was pregnant at the time. However, concern persisted over the role he played on the raising of A., the girl referred to the programme, and the proximity he had with her. Despite these concerns, they only conducted one short interview with him, did not engage him much in the process and focussed solely on the mother who was questioned over the role given to her partner.

> "The mother is told about *her role as a mother* in preventing her daughter to be exposed to a new situation of harm. *She is told she just know her partner since two years ago, it doesn't mean she knows him very well. She must be more empathic to her daughter." (*case file notes, social worker (1) and psychoeducator, Team 1, emphasis added).

The quote shows the mother as being subject to scrutiny regarding her empathy towards the daughter. Usually, with allegations of sexual abuse, the pressure is on the mother within the *failure to protect discourse*. In this case, the abuse that occurred and was the reason for referral took place with the father as the main carer, his own grown up older son being the perpetrator, something which was not further investigated. This raise concerns over the context of the father's house, where this abuse took place. What was found in the file is that it was a second brother receiving the disclosure of his sisters who decided to make the report. From this scenario, there is a question of how the team approached this evidence and there are concerns about the father regarding sexual abuse taking place in his house. However, this did not seem relevant as the questioning was applied to the mother rather than the father. In this case, neither the father nor the mother's partner was subject to further scrutiny compared what it was for the mother. Approaches to sexual abuse allegations were particularly problematic and will be subject to further discussion in another section.

In relation to the gendered expectations found, this is illustrated with a case in team 2 (05) of a girl of eight years old. The parents were apart, with the girl remaining under the care of her mother and her new partner. The father was living with a female partner who was abusive to his daughter on the occasion of contact, which took place at his house. This arrangement had been agreed by the Court. However, it became disrupted as found by the social worker:

> "In a home visiting the mother talks about the problems with the father. He has not paid the food allowance and refused to increase the amount. She also mentions the problems her daughter is having with the father's partner, who has been unkind and rude. The girl does not want to go anymore. The possibility of having the visits to the father at the parental grandparents' home is discussed as an alternative to assess". (Social worker (2), team 2, case file notes).

Later, and following a couple of incidents, where the girl was badly treated by the father's partner, with the mother wanting to stop the child contact, the social worker sought an interview with the father, who was not much engaged in the intervention allegedly due to a lack of available time:

> "In an interview with the father, he says he recently moved to another job and is keen to get more involved in the intervention but that sometimes it is difficult due to his work shifts.
> Regarding his daughter, he says he has been in touch with her but admits problems with his partner leading to arguments. Because of this, sometimes he had had to return the child to the mother before the agreed time to prevent her from having a bad time.
> He suggests his parents' house as a meeting point, but only during the daytime, not spending the whole weekend to avoid getting in trouble with his partner. He asked this to be agreed with the mother." (Social worker, team 2, case file notes).

The father was allowed to negotiate the availability for child contact, restricting the time spent with the child. And later, despite the Court's agreement being changed to child contact at the grandparents as the father asked, an incident with the father's partner ended with a call to the police. On this occasion she used violence against the child:

> "The mother comes to the office to report a recent incident of violence at the father's home. He took the girl for the weekend, even when it was not agreed. She thought he would take the

> daughter to the grandparents' house, but he went with her to his house where his partner wanted to physically abuse the girl, ending in an argument. The police had to intervene while the girl left the house. She was later found by a classmate's father, who took her home.
>
> Given the situation, the recognition of protective and risk spaces is addressed, letting the mother know the father is not prevented from seeing his daughter, that the encounters must continue, but "she must make sure the contact takes place at the grandparents' house as agreed. She is told not to refuse the visits to the father" (Social worker (2), team 2, case file notes).

With this intervention, the practitioner made the mother responsible even in the spaces of child contact where the care was assigned to the father, making him less accountable. Despite the incident and distress for the child, the father's right to this contact remained unquestioned despite failing to follow the conditions agreed with the Court (taking the daughter when he is not expected to do so). The evidence, that he was not doing enough to protect his daughter from his partner's violence as the police had to intervene and the girl had to return home with someone else was not considered an issue.

Comparison with the previous cases of mothers living with partners is stark. Mothers were more likely to be questioned and considered to be failing if putting their partners' views, defined as their own interest, before those of the child. In this case where it is the father's new female partner who is problematic, such an assumption was not put in place and neither attempts to address the issue with the father or directly with his partner. Even in those few cases where the legal system had assigned the care to the men, they appeared less pressured to take a position regarding the care of their children.

For the same case last described here, the final report shows the way the father's failures were less visible:

> "(…) the mother has been committed, the process has been carried out mainly with her, as for work-related reasons, the father finds it difficult to participate in the intervention (…) Regarding the father (...) he has been in touch with his daughter. However, due to constant disagreements between the girl and his father's partner, the social worker (...) asked the father not to expose the girl to stressful situations with his partner, agreeing on the meetings to take place at the grandparents' home, with the mother's consent.
>
> According to the mother, he is partially fulfilling the arrangement as he only spends a couple of hours with the child, who spends more time with her grandparents. No neglect is to be found, like the one who started the referral, being the parents committed to the needs of their

daughter. *The father is providing a monthly food allowance, but sometimes he doesn't do this in the dated agreed. However, in general, he is committed to his daughter.*

Conclusions

The fulfilment of the maternal role has been reinforced in the mother (…) no risk is to be seen, as the parents are fulfilling their roles. It is suggested is to end the intervention process". (Social worker and psychoeducator, Court report 3, emphasis added).

The father's failures to accomplish his duties as a parent were reported in a descriptive tone, without highlighting facts pointing to his failures as a parent, which are partially addressed (no complaint to the Court about no payment of food allowance, the irregularities of child contact, etc.). As for the persistent issues with the father's partner, they were not emphasised. There was also an incident of violent harassment against the mother described in the files notes that was not reported, concluding *he is committed to his daughter*, despite the mentioned incidents. As seen in the final part of the report, the emphasis was put on the mother's fulfilment of her role as guaranteeing the girl's well-being. The fulfilment of the fathering role seemed less relevant and unquestioned, revealing an unequal assessment of parenting and social control exercised over women that is not enforced or even considered to the same extent for men.

There is another example from another participant team. This was in Team 1 (case 02) involving three sisters, aged 15, 12 and 3 and a brother of 10 years old. The reason for the referral was neglect and the children were living with their mother as she was separated from the father. Concerns were the "risks" posed to children. Issues discussed were a lack of appropriate care reflected in the hygiene conditions, a lack of support for school attainment, with the boy having been expelled by different schools as a result of behavioural issues. The family were living in very deprived conditions. In this case, there were three female carers identified by the practitioners as available for the intervention process, the mother, the grandmother and the mother's older daughter, who provided support with the caring of her sisters and brother while the mother was at work. At the same time, their partners were also available; however, the intervention did not focus on them. They appeared to be regarded as irrelevant, as the practitioners accounts corroborated. Although some concerns were recorded regarding these male adults, the control did not operate in the same way as for the women.

An account of a home visit reveals the lack of focus on the men in this family:

"Family visit to grandparents: The child has been disruptive at school, being sent home and is now with his father, living at the oldest daughter's house. The grandparents express concern about the mother's abilities to care.

Observations and suggestions:

Psychological and parental assessment for the father is needed as information of sexual abuse emerged. It is necessary to confirm his competence regarding the children". (Social worker 2 and psychologist, team 1 case files notes, emphasis added)

From this home visit, the practitioners received information regarding allegations of sexual abuse against a child perpetrated by the father, recorded on the file as 'something to investigate'. There was no record of such investigation and no mention of the issue in the subsequent Court report. It is important to note that the concern over the father had been raised previously by the team making the referral to this programme, regarding allegations of sexual abuse perpetrated against a partner's daughter, followed by a criminal process. Despite this information being available in the file as a previous assessment, it was omitted from the concerns raised in this case as the focus was kept on the mother's perceived neglect. In the meantime, the father came back to live with the oldest daughter, approaching the children at this house. In constructing this sudden appearance as positive involvement, this seemed to overshadow any concern about the father. This led to a disastrous consequence as shortly after this sudden appearance, there was a disclosure from the youngest child regarding her father's improper touching while at the oldest daughter's home. A report made to the Family Court and the Prosecution Service followed, with the team introducing different caring arrangements for the children. Despite this severe harm done by the father, the focus was still maintained on the mother as seen in the report sent to the Court:

"After home visiting, it is found and reported that the child Z. has been a victim of sexual abuse perpetrated by her father, the grandmother unable to continue caring for the young children. The older sister and her partner with a close relationship with them able to provide care. Despite *the mother being a significant third part, she is not considered fit to protect as she has not given economic support and has not followed suggestions made regarding her therapeutic intervention."* (Social worker and psychologist, court report, emphasis added.)

Following the disclosure of the abuse, a new caring arrangement was set and informed to the Court but highlighting in the report that 'the mother is not considered fit to protect', even though the abuse was at the oldest daughter's house. The mother had expressed concern

about the father being there. However, there is no judgement of him in the report. In another final document the team sent to the court they argued:

> *"...The female adults have displayed new neglectful behaviours which are added to the life history of the child referred*. This is a *severe* violation of rights. The older sister did not turn up to provide an account to the Criminal agency regarding the criminal offence previously reported. *She has also not complied with the suggestion of having work shifts during school time to look after Z. in the afternoons. Her partner has been found with the girl and with his own son (...) The mother has not complied with the agreement regarding postponing the start of a new relationship to privilege the care of her child*, even though she has a history of being a victim of violence in her past relationships, *being the dependenct towards her partners and interference with the adequate display of her protective role.*
>
> It is suggested to modify the judicial protective measure for Z., M., and K. with the residential care of them in (...) given that there are *no adults with the competence needed to take responsibility for this role"*. (Social worker, psychologist, and team leader, Court report 4, emphasis added).

The 'female adults' of the family (mother, grandmother and older sister) were regarded in the file as 'significant adults'and, as such, the accountable, displaying neglect, therefore, taking the blame. They were constructed as such since the actions have focussed on them, while the male adults are not reported as causing harm, despite evidence that they have. From such assumptions, the expectation for them to arrange their lives (work shifts, postponing partner' relationships, seen as interfering with the protective role) in order to guarantee the protection of the children became naturalised. Even when there was evidence of concerns pointing at the men, especially the father, he was not subject to any further investigation or systematic approach regarding making him accountable, even after the disclosure of the abuse.

As reflected in these cases reviewed, different social agents and institutions operated on the basis that women are supposed to prioritise their children's well-being before their own interests, but not constructing the same discourse for fathers. This seems reasonable when considering CP scenarios and the need to put children's needs as paramount, being also a duty of the State. However, regarding discourses, this finding needs to be analysed by comparing the control exercised on women and on men, which in this research is revealed to be more focussed on women, as shown in this section. This control is reflected in the value-laden expectations regarding women's personal lifestyles as more likely to occur than in the

case of men, even when those men do not fulfil their (gendered) obligations and may be the cause of distress for children through their violent, inappropriate or even abusive behaviour. These assumptions are reflected in the differential visibility given to mothers versus fathers in the practitioners' accounts

5.4.2. Women under scrutiny

Case files consistently contained more information on mothers' history than of fathers, whose backgrounds were hardly introduced in the accounts. Women's lives were more likely to be revealed and to be subjected to scrutiny, especially when they were in reconstituted families, as previously mentioned.

The following account was found in Team 3, a case of a boy of 10 years old, referred to the programme by the Family Court, due to physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by the father and stepmother. He had been living with his father since he was around 6 months old when the father broke up with the mother, who stayed with the older brother. Following the report and referral to Team 3, the father passed the care of the child to the mother.

In the first report sent to the Court it was described:

> " Miss S. has three other children, from other relationships, that are not with her, but others. She has a family history of several relationships' breakups, as well as the separation of the referred child from his significant figures.
> From the age of 6 months, J. is left under the care of his father and grandmother, while his brother B. continues to be with his mother. During the intervention process, the engagement of the adults gets difficult because the father denies the abuse against the child, undermining his participation and commitment from the start (...) Later and as ordered by the Court, the care of the child is provisionally given to his mother, who is available to accompany the healing process of the child, but refuses to go deeper in family matters. This has been improving lately (…) There is a *lack of empathy* regarding the emotional needs of the boy, with the mother not seeing the impact of the absence of her role as a mother on J. history. Decision making suggested: The child continues in the programme to heal the harm done.
> To support the mother in her parenting capacity" (social worker, team 3, court report 1. Emphasis added).

The mother's history of failures was described, emphasising the lack of emotional warmth. Implicit was the attribution of blame and the assessment of her as not fulfilling a

mother's role and identity as previously analysed. She appeared more exposed to scrutiny and moral blaming than the father, who was mostly absent in the report, despite his abusive behaviour being the cause of the referral.

However, something that was not represented in the narrative of the mother's history in the report was her own voice, speaking of her experiences as a CP victim. This was available on the case file internal notes but did not figure as part of the main construction made. She had told the practitioner she was a victim of maternal abandonment and maltreatment as the notes read:

> "The mother says she is willing to keep the care of J. in the long term, emphasising that if she knew his father was going to maltreat the boy, she would not leave him.
> She adds: "I have been through many things in my life since my mother abandoned me, I was in residential care, then my grandparents didn't care for me, I was on drugs and alcohol and other things, now I stopped that and want to get over it with my children. Sometimes I don't know how to be a mum, but I am learning*"*
> The father is visiting the boy once a week, but not providing for material needs". (case files notes, social worker, Team 3).

In the report quoted previously, there was a complaint about the mother refusing to go deeper into her personal history. However, this vivid account was dismissed as such, as the construction provided to the Court chose to highlight the failures as a mother, rather than her own damaged state as a result of her history. At the same time, the father's abusive behaviour had less emphasis in the descriptions, despite evidence that he was not fulfilling his role by not engaging and not providing for the material needs of his son.

The exposition of women's lives was also revealed in the case files when looking at the reports of parenting assessment requested by the courts before referrals to the intervention programmes. Going back to a case handled by Team 2 (05), described in the previous section (p.104), this same case illustrates the control coming out of the exposition and scrutiny over women's lives, while men's lives tend to be overlooked. In this case, there were two types of assessment, one psychosocial assessment report and one marental capacity assessment report, with no paternal capacity assessment requested. The psychosocial report, although mentioning some aspects regarding the father, such as the parents' relationship ending due to domestic violence, lacks further information about him or his past history. There is a more detailed account on the mother's past and current situation, such as her having a partner,

violent episodes perpetrated by her and her mental health issues that were under treatment at the local health service. In addition to that, a marental capacity assessment concluding:

> "The mother is in the category of *partial dysfunctional parenting* as she shows important failures in relevant aspects of the *marental role.* Emotional harm is revealed related to experiences of sexual abuse during her childhood that impact upon her emotional stability and marental performance (...) Despite her having had a *dysfunctional parenting* that is not to say that she cannot continue caring for her daughter. However, it is recommended that the situation is subject to professional intervention with a psychiatrist to receive medical treatment to overcome her mental health problem.
>
> The child is referred to (...) (Team 2). The program should promote marental skills to strengthen the mother-child bond that is empathetic and protective". (Signed by psychologist, assessment team, emphasis added).

The mother became exposed by detailing all her traumatic childhood. Regarding the father, as said, no information is recorded as compared to the extent of information revealed about the mother's personal history. However, this did not mean those accounts made them visible to the system other than in their roles as mothers as seen in this account and what will be further examined below.

5.4.3. Women as victims: invisible or instrumental

As a result of women's lives becoming more revealed in the case files, another theme found was the extent to which they had trajectories as victims (sexual and physical abuse in their childhood, domestic violence in their families or in current and previous relationships, etc.). However, looking at the intervention plans and strategies, this was an issue hardly considered in cases analysis, even in situations where direct women's help-seeking was emerging. The effect is that the impact the victimisation was having on their mothering processes appears less determinant in the intervention and the understandings achieved, as it was with the case described in the previous section. This invisibility of mothers as victims seems to be the result of expectations on parenting. As they involve keeping a focus on children's victimisation, mothers' histories were more likely to be represented when they were instrumental in practitioners' strategies to address children' needs.

> "She is told to prioritise her child's well-being, reminding her of the emotional harm experienced by herself when growing up without her mother."(social worker, case files notes, team 3).

It was found that when histories had some visibility, they were used to push women to reflect on their harm and the perceived harm they were doing to their children. The strategy in this case used by a social worker was acknowledged as a tool by one of the psychologists interviewed in the same team, who provided a theoretical justification for using the mothers' victimisation as a strategy to make them reflect on the damage done to her children.

> Psychologist: Then, this woman has a remarkable history of abandonment, with a very punitive mother, she has also a history of non-recognised physical abuse, then seeing her and reflecting with her on that, she started to see some things, at least becoming open to doubts...
> Researcher: when talking about her history?
> Psychologist: I. from her history, yes (…) there are some English authors (…) they talk a lot about this in a book, and they mention the transgenerational, that you cannot, that when your pain was not seen, it is preventing you from seeing the pain in others, like developing a pig's skin[33] (...). (Interview psychologist Team 3)

This specific narrative that came across some cases was intended as stressing the outcomes of maternal deprivation, showing the theoretical underpinnings for such constructions. In these cases, there was no complete erasure of mothers as victims, as it was in an important number of cases. The point here is how the visibility of mothers as victims is not intended as giving them a voice but as a specific strategy within the practitioners' framing to address children's needs. In the case of a mother that was found to be having mental health issues resulting from her history, issues with the health centre approach emerged:

> "The mother recognizes her mistake, expressing that she felt threatened by the Health Centre practitioner about taking M. into a residential care.
> She realises about the need to start a psychological and psychiatric treatment to support her capabilities in relation to the *maternal role."* (social worker, case file notes, team 1.).

The mother's voice was not represented in the account provided to the Court along with the issue of her being afraid of the Health Centre practitioner and the threats mentioned, which prevented her engagement with a systematic treatment. It was a pattern found in the way that referrals of women to mental health services were instrumental in the strategies pursued to reinforce their role as mothers, as seen in the extract above. As in other cases

[33] Chilean saying to express when someone becomes untouched by emotional pain.

already reviewed, the visibility of the damage and the need of healing became relevant regarding the *marental role*, not for her mental health on its own but instrumental for the intervention objectives centred on the children, as expected from the guidelines. However, the issue of weighing the impact of the mothers' damage on children's outcomes and the whole intervention process seemed complex and requiring more reflection. As one practitioner commented, this was something that impacted upon interventions, yet not addressed.

Compared to men, in general, their histories were almost absent, with their condition as victims (childhood experiences of abuse) counting much more to justify their violence, making room again for analysis on histories as instrumental to privileged constructions in practitioners' accounts. This invisibility of men's trajectories is not only related to the teams' dismissal. The courts and the assessments requested by them were particularly focussing more on women, despite the legal discourse and statutory measures allowing them to have more access to these men. A more detailed description is provided in the next section.

5.5. Men's histories and violence: the invisibility

As said before, references to men's histories were scarce compared to those of women. In general, apart from the cases of on-going domestic violence perpetrated mainly in nuclear families, the majority of cases with Mapuche ethnicity, the men that were violent in the past or exercising different forms of violence (controlling behaviour, threats, manipulation, etc.) were less visible in their personal trajectories. This happened in ten of the eighteen cases. Some lesser mentions appeared for those fathers that were more present during the intervention process, regarding childhood histories of maltreatment or domestic violence in the birth families. However, in general, constructions of men were not that recurrent in the accounts, except for cases where more close surveillance was taking place, such as in domestic violence scenarios.

Associated with this absence of constructions of men, one pattern found is the invisibility of men's violence and the erasure of their abusive behaviour, despite being directly linked to referrals. Regarding this erasure, one finding is the issue of child sexual abuse, which seems to disappear in some cases. One clear example is case 02 in team 1, previously analysed (p.106) of the father involved in criminal investigations yet still ended up abusing his daughter. This criminal investigation record, available in the case file on a previous report made, was dismissed by the practitioners, as well as the mother's anxiety regarding him approaching the children, as reflected by one of the practitioners:

Psychologist: (...) but over the time I feel that we were mistaken and for the worst in the end, as we did not perform well in assessing whether this father was protective enough. *He showed himself to be very appropriate, very protective with the children, in general, but there was information there regarding sexual abuse that we did not, we did not consider, and by pushing the process in that way we ended up doing a lot of harm to one of the daughters…*

R. humm, and the situation occurred, yes…

Psychologist: the abusive situation occurred (…) I feel we promoted or validated that the father getting in touch with the children when ehhh…, and here there are family secrets involved as well, as this family perhaps had reasons not to do so, and then when us ...

R. Do you feel the family somehow was trying to show that he was not...?

Psychologist: From behalf of the mother, yes, ¡of course! She always said there were things in this man that made her stay apart and that she had a deep pain regarding that, but she never said what that was... (Interview with psychologist, team 1).

Here there is a reflection on not having scrutinised the father before promoting child contact and not listening enough to the mother's concerns. However, the same practitioner made this analysis regarding the family dynamics:

"It was a kind of matriarchy because the men here were sort of *satellites* in the relationship, the grandfather at some point had lost the protagonist role that apparently, he previously had, and not a positive one but a bit of an abuser. So then, now, the women were holding the reins…"

When asked what he thought was the problem with this family, preventing them from providing good care, he said the grandmother was also neglectful and that situations of sexual abuse were part of the family secrets.

Psychologist: (...) I had the feeling that there was a family history, a *family culture* that was not used to treat the children well or was abusive to the children. The maternal mother, who was the one we got to know more, she was...this grandmother was very neglectful while as a mother, let´s say, with her children, she was abusive as well...

R. In what ways she was neglectful?

Psychologist: …The care of her children, besides the economic precariousness that made them live in overcrowded conditions, then, this mother was also a victim of sexual abuse that at some point she revealed… (Interview with psychologist, Team 1, emphasis added)

What is seen is that while the male figures are the ones perpetrating the active harm, those who are constructed as responsible are the female figures, in this case, the grandmother for the issues that took place within the family. The grandfather, whose abusive behaviour was marginally mentioned, remained invisible. Then, these men became constructed in the practitioner's words as *satellites*. Probably these men wanted to remain in the shadows regarding their violence and the harm they did to the family. With this in mind, their status as *satellites* may not be the practitioners' doing. However, they did construct them as such in language and practices, becoming trapped in keeping them in that position either by not scrutinising them enough or by making them accountable. The result is maintaining the discourse of mother-blaming by constructing the problem as the mother's or women's neglect rather than men's violence, abusive behaviour and neglect towards the children, even with evidence available. In this pervasive process, the erasure was so powerful the practitioners could not see the risk the father was representing, and in some cases were assisting the perpetrator in maintaining a satellite position away from scrutiny. This idea of men as satellites is important and it is discussed and developed further in this thesis.

Something similar happens in case 2, team 3, with allegations of sexual abuse that had put the daughter in residential care for a period and then in foster care family of relatives whilst the assessment of the parents took place. In that case, previous reports and other agencies accounts were overlooked, as the practitioners kept a favourable impression of the father accused of sexually abusing his daughter. There was another case, within the same scenario, in the same team, handled by a different dyad where the case was dropped from the criminal prosecution service as no evidence could be found. However, in this situation the practitioners were more coercive, putting pressure on the mother to acknowledge the abuse.

Sexual abuse is highly complex regarding the disclosure and the processes that make the victims unable to seek help, especially in the cases of children, and when the abuse takes place in the family. The data here is not enough as to solve the question of why this invisibility of sexual violence operated in some cases and not in others or why contradictory approaches were put in place across the teams. What can be seen is that there were two cases with criminal records that pointed at the fathers that were dismissed. In one of these cases mentioned the family was Mapuche, and this was the most questioned of the three fathers facing allegations of sexual abuse. The practitioners had made the case about the risks within Mapuche communities associated with alcohol consumption, making statements regarding the culture validating abusive relationships. Thus, it seems that men's violence in the form of sexual violence is more likely to be identified as a concern for indigenous men, as it happens

with domestic violence. The explanation regarding the cultural norms as being different than for the rest of the Chilean population (white) make the attributions of sexual abuse less dominant for these men, so they become invisible, functioning as an unconscious bias. This requires some further analysis as it seems relevant given this study has found an increasing number of Mapuche families coming into the CP system, with the operation of possible biases and prejudices operating in subtle ways. This is something to be further discussed in the next chapter.

Adding to evidence on the differences in approaches and how men's violence becomes erased, this was particularly noticeable in another case involving a serious violent incident to a young child. This case (06, in Team 2) was referred following an investigation and judicial process against the father of V. a boy of 4years old at the time of the initial report. The father was reported to the police by his mother after finding him with a rope put around the child's neck, while in child contact at their house. The parents were separated, and child contact used to take place at the paternal grandparents' house. The case was treated as a crime of attempted parricide and was referred to the Family Court to decide arrangements with the family. The parents were under suspicion of hiding the continuity of the relationship, which was a concern for the practitioners that framed it as 'tortuous', with breakups, followed by reconciliations and complicity and incidents of violence. The father, a teacher of secondary school and the mother finishing a degree in Law, being a middle-class family, were not within the usual profile of service users, as highlighted by the social worker in the interview.

The Family Court made the referral to team 2 with the aim of 'strengthening the mother and grandmother's protective capacity, as the main carers. Following the investigation of the case, a forensic assessment for the father revealed a personality with 'narcissistic traits, self- centred and manipulative, and lack of self-control' with the forensic psychologist suggesting 'the interruption of the regular contact between Mr. H. and his son as risk is still posed to the child' (forensic assessment). However, the court decided to keep child contact as seen in the extract of the recordings of the Court hearing below:

> "it is applied a statutory measure (...), in view of the risks posed (...), his family being composed of the mother and grandmother, referred to the (Team 2) as a priority with the aim that this agency provides intervention aimed at promoting the mother and the grandmother's parenting skills, strengthening those negative aspects found by the assessment team, (…) and informing of progress made, *monitoring the direct and regular contact between the father and*

the child, which will be determined by the team in charge, having to inform shortly to this Court the way this should proceed to guarantee the rights of V. (the child). To request information regarding the psychotherapy for the mother (. ..)" (Family Court order, emphasis added)

Both the assessment team and the Court introduced the mother as failing, despite 'not maltreating to the child', as the report stated. The father was referred to psychological treatment, which he did not comply with and for which he was forced to engage with as part of the intervention. This focussed on the mother, who was assigned to ensure the protection of the child. The father's violence was, therefore, minimised and erased, despite the police report (not included here) describing the incident as serious as involving threats with a knife against his own mother and an attempt to strangle the child. This latter was never determined as real or not. In any circumstances, the child was reported as having felt very distressed, crying and anxious witnessing his father's lack of self-control. It is intriguing the Court's decision to dismiss the professional opinion emanated from a respectable legal body in charge of these types of forensic assessments in Chile. A weighing of the right to child contact was probably an issue, as seen in the referral document. However, it can be wondered how they balanced this right with the risks posed. The operation of a discourse of family preservation may be discussed as it resulted in the father's violence becoming invisible. Issues of class and race might be analysed as well, in understanding the approach. There were differences when the fathers were of indigenous or rural backgrounds, as it will be further analysed in chapter six.

In this case, following the court framing, the approach taken by the team was to assign more responsibility to the mother. She was regarded as responsible for harming the child by keeping the relationship with the father. The approach to the intervention was emphasising parenting roles. There was a mention in the files notes regarding concerns over the father, given the cause of referral:

"There is information regarding alcohol consumption by the father, with domestic violence incidents against the mother. The father does not recognise his neglect.

No fulfilment of the parenting role, with parental neglect exercised by the father that started the referral". (Social worker 1, case files notes).

However, this concern is not in the report sent to Court, which emphasised the progress made after three interviews with the father over a period of 5 months. There is no mention of the father's denial of the cause of referral and the information obtained concerning issues of domestic violence reported. This first report made by the initial social worker. Then, there was staff turnover and a second social worker continued. During this second period, there were a couple of incidents with the father using violence, intimidating and controlling behaviour towards the mother that were not reported as concerns to the Court despite being linked to the origin of the referral. He did not get engaged with the intervention. However, this is also misrepresented as the evidence shows in the case file:

> "It is worth mentioning that during this period; the social worker has been working with the father in parenting roles". (case file notes, social worker).

However, in the interview she said about him:

> SW: it is in the file's notes, I used to call Mr. A…and he used to say "I am at work, or it's that I am out of the city now…" he came only once! only once to the intervention! And all the time like this… (uses body language), defensive.
> R. yes, hum, hum...
> SW: I remember that I did not like him, I must acknowledge it (laugh).

Even with a negative impression about him due to his lack of engagement and attitude, the social worker went on to portray him in positive terms to the Court, misrepresenting his engagement with the intervention, which in the end did not happen, and therefore, no work on parenting could be conducted with him. Two issues can have an influence, she explained in the interview they, as a team wanted to close the case and the Court refused, probably due to the use of the concept of a 'tortuous relationship' they were using to describe the parents' relationship and that probably worried the court. Then, to make the court agree on closing the case, the intervention was framed as positive. Secondly, the need for the practitioners to appear as competent might also have played a role. Having reviewed the case files, in other cases different forms of overrating processes were found that were not that successful as they were constructed to the court. It may function not only as a process of erasing men's violence but also the practitioner's failure to engage them.

Whatever the reasons here, the issue that emerges is the extent that men's violence and lack of engagement became invisible within the practitioners' constructions, not only when they actively produced an account for someone else, such as the court or the supervisors, but also in the internal voices of their notes. We can see that the operations of erasing men's violence seem pervasive and transdisciplinary as different lens end up erasing the concerns about the violence that is the main issue to address. On the other hand, as current violence becomes erased, it was found that their histories were not part of the diagnosis process as it was the case for mothers.

However, it is necessary to mention that the invisibility of men was not reduced to abusive behaviour. In reconstituted families, male partners were only marginally approached and not systematically involved in the interventions. They were kept away, which reveals that there is a construction of men as not relevant to the work done with families, regardless of whether they were perpetrators of abuse or not, which invites us to reflect on the type of constructions made and the interactions between practitioners and services users.

5.6. Gender relations and gender positioning in practices

A finding not so visible in the case files accounts but emerging from the interviews with the practitioners is the impact of gender positionality as part of the dynamics of the relationship with services users. Practitioners reflected on the differences in the relationships with mothers and fathers, respectively. Both male and female practitioners perceived the relationship of female users with male practitioners to be easier. Some expressed women (users) were actively deciding on building on collaboration or not according to gendered relations, put clearly in the excerpt below, from an interview with a female practitioner:

> "We see that a gender pattern it is reproduced, there is machismo that unfortunately impacts upon family dynamics. That is clearly regarding men, but, at the same time there are cases of domestic violence where women cannot build a relationship with female practitioners and they question them. It becomes a very complex relationship, while with a male practitioner they adopt a totally different attitude and lower their voices and somehow adopt the same type of relationship that they have with the perpetrator" (Interview with social worker, team 3).

Other interviewees also reflected on the differences brought to the intervention by the parents' gender. It seems they were aware that users were also constructing them as gendered and responding according to these assumptions about them as practitioners. There was, for

instance, the mention of fathers becoming controlling of their female partners' encounters with male practitioners. In general, male practitioners were of the idea that their relationship with female users was not difficult, while female practitioners had a different perspective. For instance, a female social worker (SW) when asked about the main challenges in her practice, she said:

> "Regarding challenges I think that it is when families are too pathological, especially the mothers, when I try different strategies to work with them and frankly, they don't get anything. It is like they incorporate something in their discourse, but when it comes to assessing whether this is real or not you can see they have not integrated anything of what is talked about in every session!" (Interview with S.W team 3).

As seen from this and other accounts, female practitioners were harsher with women when compared to their constructions of men. They were exercising much more control through the expectations posed and identity constructions they were reinforcing. This is for instance reflected in the evidence provided regarding the unequal assessment of parenting and the constant blame of mothers that dismissed the fathers' failures. It was consistent to find more negative constructions of mothers than fathers. Some excerpts from the interviews revealed some of the assumptions made:

> "At least, in this case, this is a father that comes, he allows some time to come here for the intervention and I don't know, maybe both lie, but I feel he lies less than the mother". (interview SW, team 2).

It was found in some practitioners' descriptions narratives such as: 'the mother was discursive' or *'from her discourse…'* reflecting they were somehow assuming women as trying to deceive, which was explicitly stated in some cases. This was not found regarding men. Therefore, women were constructed as less reliable than men, despite having more encounters with them. This reflects the dynamics of the relationships which are built and how gender is implicated. It seems the case that this relationship was sometimes was shaped by such assumptions of women being problematic or trying to employ a 'discourse', like a type of script.

In turn, with men, female practitioners seemed in a less coercive position, where although trying to have some degree of control, render it less achievable, having to

subordinate to men's agenda and assume their distant position. In cases involving domestic violence, there was also the issue of fear and the dynamics of male domination shaping the relationship in some cases more explicitly, with the use of aggressive attitudes that threaten female younger practitioners.

While for male practitioners' relationships with men, these seemed to be engaged in the enactment of their masculinities and measuring forces. These went from collaboration in a few cases to most commonly power struggles, as men seemed to resist the perceived power of male practitioners over them. Male users were found more reluctant to disclose personal matters to other men. One male practitioner reflected on that power struggle with a man that demonstrates feeling pressured or challenged by the male practitioners, something that was not seen in the contact with female practitioners. There was one young social worker that mentioned perceiving men as collaborative as long as the work done was making sense for them, and that when this was not the case, they actively blocked the intervention.

In summary, gender was perceived as an element intervening in the encounters with the families. Some practitioners analysed the impact on engagement with the interventions as some of them were aware of being constructed as gendered. They were less aware, though, the extent to which they were constructing mother and fathers as gendered as well. This confirms the subtle and intricate ways gender is operating in the dynamics of everyday practices in the CP work, wielding an influence in the constructions described and where a gender order seemed to be operating in a subtle form and reproduced in the practices.

Summary

This chapter presented the first part of the findings emerging from the thematic analysis. Through the the evidence reviewed, it has been revealed how constructions of mothers' role in the form of the *marental role*, as a category recurrently employed by practitioners was more dominant than accounts of the fathering role. This led to women being overrepresented in the accounts, compared to fathers, reflected in more detailed information regarding their histories. Despite this visibility, it renders invisible their condition as victims, which operated to focus on their failures as mothers. Derived from this focus, a set of expectations are posed to mothers, constructed as integral to women's identity, which was not seen for men to the same extent. They became less visible and accountable for the violence and harm they were perpetrating as the protection of children was feminised. Therefore, it was found that constructions of women and men within the teams' daily accounts were gendered as differential expectations are posed according to the roles that parents were

supposed to be performing. This ended in an unequal assessment of parenting, with more scrutiny over the behaviours of women than men. Men were found identified as ‘satellites’, a construction that subtly endorsed and perpetuated their unaccountability.

Another finding is the construction of gender following the gendered positionality played out in in the dynamics of gender relations between practitioners and services users. However, gender was not the only factor, as some variations regarding specific issues such as sexual abuse were perceived with possible biases according to ethnicity and class, which will be further analysed in the next chapter that sets out an intersectional analysis.

CHAPTER SIX

Thematic analysis II: An intersectional perspective: The intertwined nature of gender, violence and culture within the CP narratives

6.1. Introduction

Having in the previous chapter discussed findings showing how gender was implicated in the constructions of parents, emergent themes intersecting with the category of gender are developed in this chapter. These are noticeably linked to cases of Mapuche families, although some of the concerns were visible for non-indigenous families, emphasis, approaches and understandings were different, in a way gender alone cannot explain. These differences made me consider the need to look at them through an intersectional lens, as explained in chapter four.

This chapter discusses the intersection of gender, class, ethnicity and location in practitioners' approaches. Three main themes are explored, beginning the first section with emergent gender categories seen in practitioners's accounts. This appeared linked to issues of domestic violence, and more consistently with Mapuche families. The second section focusses on the intersecting nature of supposed 'risk factors' as conceptualised by the practitioners, whereby Mapuche culture became problematised, on account of perceived links to issues of domestic violence, alcohol misuse and childrearing practices. Issues of cultural competence and the dynamics of gender relations in indigenous communities are emergent elements here leading to biases. Thirdly, through a case review, there is an analysis of the impact of structural inequalities related to geographical location as key to understanding understand its impact on the dynamics of gender relations in Mapuche families.

6.2. Gender across practices

Across the identification of themes in the professional accounts, the use of language referring to gender emerged as overt in some of the cases reviewed. As this research is concerned with gender in discourse, this finding was clearly relevant. Findings revealed SENAME's integration of the gender perspective across its programs, as discussed in chapter two, being reflected in the use of language. It was visible in policy guidelines and the teams' procedural frameworks reviewed. It was also mentioned by the three team leaders in initial contacts and also by a key gatekeeper in National SENAME. In practice, the requirement for professional interventions to integrate a gender perspective resulted in some cases' narratives displaying clear categories associated with such analysis, as seen below:

"The family structure is patriarchal due to the stepfather's authoritarian style that is resulting in rigid norms that come into conflict with the child. Dysfunctional parenting". (Social worker, case files notes, team 2).

In another team:

"The family lives within a *patriarchal* system, determined by *machismo*, with gender views that support the supremacy of men over women (…) From the the children's discourse it is found that they have *normalised machismo*, especially the boy, who Thinks his sister deserves the beating as well as his mother (...)" (social worker and psychoeducator, Court report 1, team 1, emphasis added).

Specifically, accounts of patriarchy and machismo, and sometimes authoritarianism were more often cited in those descriptions, as the quotations illustrate. These categories were found in the accounts coming from participating teams as well as the reports written by assessment teams (see chapter two, fig. 2). The categories were often documenting issues around domestic violence and child abuse. The same ideas were reported in the interviews conducted, where the participants made it clear that were links with culturally determined gender norms. First, it is important to notice the way gender was employed. By looking at some of the accounts, there seem to be competing degrees of gender awareness or sensitivity as reflected in the practitioners' analysis. The extracts below are some examples:

"Regarding a gender perspective, role distribution follows a non-traditional scheme, as both men and women contribute to living for the family. However, the caring of the children is distributed among the mother, the aunt and the grandmother, respectively. Regarding the father, he is mainly absent from home, focussing on providing for material needs" (social worker, Team 3 case file's notes case 03).

In case 06, team 2

"From a gender perspective, *shared roles* are observed in the parents, regarding economic support and care for the child. Regarding housekeeping duties, a traditional approach discernible, with the female adult being in charge of the duties. She is active in reducing the gap in opportunities between men and women as she displays different roles, such as

economic support, (…) *she also gives some responsibility for child raising to the father*. All of this, f*rom the perspective of this professional, reduces the gap of inequality between men and women* ..." (report of assessment team, emphasis added).

These two accounts from two different teams reveal a contradictory and contested analysis as the burden put on women regarding caring duties becomes invisible in the 'gender equality' perceived. Such analysis fails to consider the unequal gender division of caring and the imbalances, something previously shown in more detail in chapter five. The same applies to the issue of economic inequalities, which were often seen in the irregularity of the family incomes due to some fathers' non-payment of due food allowances. This issue was rarely framed in regard to the well-being of the children and their needs, while the mothers' failures to meet the children's needs were never invisible.

Regarding how dominant gender became in the language seen, the findings reveal that in team 1 this was more prevalent, by providing accounts of gender and cultural norms as underlying factors, especially within domestic violence scenarios. In the other two teams, gender was slightly less dominant and observed only in those cases of physical violence and where men were viewed as a threat to the children. In the cases where a gender analysis could have been applied to visibilise inequalities and other forms of violence, this was overlooked. The fact that gender analysis was more prevalent in team 1 was found associated with this perspective applied to Mapuche families, which will be one of the main themes of this chapter. First, it is important to sketch the nature of this gender analysis.

The use of the concept *empowerment* was recurrent in the practitioners' accounts in narratives of 'empowering women to display the marental role*'*. This was a key strategy, specifically in violence scenarios. This is illustrated with a case in Team 3 (06). This involved domestic violence episodes within the father's alcohol misuse pattern as a threat for the mother and children, which was consistently framed under the notion of mother's empowerment as the excerpt below shows:

"It is necessary to integrate the mother to the process to *empower her in her role*, seeing her as a potential protective factor, in view of her bond to the children, and recognising the importance that she is the one in charge of mobilising in favour of the child and her siblings". (Social worker and psychologist, Court report 1, team 3, emphasis added).

In this case, of a Mapuche traditional family, beggining the intervention with the perpetrator father coming to the programme, the practitioners wanted to shift to work with the mother to put her in charge of protecting the children. Understanding this as a strategy to challenge the father's attempt to prevent the mother from having direct contact with the practitioners, we can question the outcome. Instead of setting a work with the father to promote the changes with him and make him stop the violence, the practitioners focused in working with the mother to push her to talk about the violence and keeping her as responsible for the protection of the children. This strategy overlooked the risks and her vulnerable position.

> *"She is encouraged to be brave and protect her children*, being available to them. It must be her concern to avoid violence in the family, to be positive that she is commenting on the issues that arise but also that she mobilises in relation to that". (social worker, case files notes, Team 3, case 06, emphasis added).

The empowerment understanding here seems inextricably linked to reinforcing the traditional role of women as mothers, specifically in the protective aspect reviewed in chapter five. This is not consistent with what was meant by empowerment with the introduction of the gender mainstreaming paradigm as a key concept to address gender inequality. The framing was, on the contrary, reproducing gender inequalities. Thus, it seems that there has been some misinterpretation of concepts, with language used as a vehicle for discourses that are contradictory. Thus, the understanding of empowerment here seems integrated to a narrative within the frame of maternal identity that makes work with women instrumental, but not aimed at addressing power imbalances within the gender regimes operating in the families. Additionally, empowerment understood as challenging men's violence, as was also implied in this case, did not consider an assessment of risks. In this case, the strategy of pushing the mother to talk more about the violence and challenging the father was followed by a serious episode of death threats that forced a restraining order. As will be described in the following sections, some nuanced understandings regarding gender analysis were in place and shaped the practices where the category appeared as relevant, especially in contexts of domestic violence.

6.2.1. Gender and domestic violence

As discussed previously, the word gender or its analysis appeared mostly in the accounts linked to violence scenarios. Out of the 13 interviews conducted, almost all the practitioners identified domestic violence as one of the main issues, perceived by them as a pattern in the cases they were handling. They emphasised the increase in referrals related to this issue, as in their views, even when cases had been referred for a different reason, varied degrees and types of domestic violence were usually involved, as reflected below:

> "Look, I think if I have to put it in terms of a percentage, around 70%, as there are, for instance, cases that have been referred for sexual abuse … [R. yes] but there is domestic violence as well…" (social worker 2, Team 3).

With violence being a key issue to address, it became clear how the link established with gender categories in some understandings and approaches was employed as in the following examples:

> "Violence of the father. Family structure and culture as *patriarchal*, preventing the mother from being in a protective role, normalising *machista* practices within the family. She is devalued and subjugated by her partner. The father uses physical violence to punish the children, having a background of violence in his family history". (Psychologist, team 1, emphasis added).

A similar analysis was found in another team (case 06 from team 3), with a violence scenario as well. In the first report to the Court, the situation is described as:

> "The family structure is of male leadership, with a traditional distribution of roles. There are machista stereotypes held by the father, who says he is in charge of making decisions without considering the mother's opinion, who is in an inferior position within the family (…) He (the father) has been validated in the use of power with the methods of subjugation he employs" (social worker and psychologist).

It was in these cases where gender was overtly employed in language. This was consistently for cases of Mapuche families, living together, compared to the cases of separated families, with some few reconstituted families as seen in chapter five (see table 1). For the case of the quote above, as with another of Mapuche ethnicity (case 04, Team 1) with

a similar scenario, coercive measures were undertaken, by asking the fathers to get medical treatment as alcohol misusers and for the mothers get involved with Women's centres within a gender perspective framework.

However, competing discourses were seen in place and informed interventions at different stages. For instance, for the last example above, after pointing out the subordination of the mother to the authoritarian and machista regime of the father, a language that emphasises the gendered nature of the violence, in the second period of the intervention the practitioners shifted to frame the case under a different narrative, as the following quote illustrates:

> "Strategies of clear and effective communication have been promoted with both parents, aimed at conflict resolution" (social worker, case files notes, Team 3).

At this point the focus was placed on child-rearing styles and the parenting capacity framework, leaving gender violence behind, and the father's behaviour as a threat as secondary. The implications were the erasure of the condition of the mother as a victim. This may reveal how a gendered analysis was still not fully ingrained and that the usual framing of a dysfunctional family and parenting retained dominance across understandings, precluding the emergence of others. Although gender analysis allowed practitioners to see the role of gender norms and cultural assumptions, they clearly come into tension with the gender perspective. As analysed regarding the assigned responsibility of women in violence scenarios, the way that violence is understood placed more focus on the role of women in addressing the issue. This was the case even in those cases where some work could be done with the perpetrating fathers. The narratives found showed some nuances in the understandings and approaches to these domestic violence scenarios, where issues of belonging, class and certainly ethnicity seem to play a role in these understandings. It was noticeable some differences in the handling of violence involving Mapuche and non-Mapuche families. Although, as seen in the examples, sometimes competing understandings were leading to maintain the focus on parenting and the perceived dysfunctionality involved, obscuring an initial gender analysis. This was particularly the case where other understandings of violence, specifically applied to the Mapuche families and their culture were in operation. In general, practitioners were more prone to see the impact of the gender order in the latter, than in the non-indigenous families. It was found that the use of physical violence was more clearly associated with male dominance. This was more often reported in

the cases of indigenous families, where gender norms were described as more traditional. In contrast, gender analysis was less prone to point out inequalities or gender-based violence in non-indigenous families, and, where violence was adopting tactics of coercive control, as they were in mainly separated families and where issues around child contact were more prevalent. In those cases, the gender order was not subject to systematic problematisation and, rendering visible the gendered nature of violence seemed less clear and consistent. This will be illustrated with a case handled in team 2. The case was of domestic violence, perhaps wrongly sent to CP. There was no clear risk posed to the 14 years old adolescent referred. She was already receiving support from the health centre by a psychologist. This professional made the referral to the Family Court, reporting the adolescent's account of her father threatening to kill her mother, within a context of on-going violence. This was a nuclear and middle-class family. Following the referral, the Family Court ordered an assessment prior to a Court hearing to rule on the case (see fig.2, chapter two). The assessment team also showing competing discourses in their understandings as on one hand, they analysed the family system as 'patriarchal, with domination and domestic violence' involved, to then continue pointing out the dysfunctionality of the family, with 'mutual violence' and the mother 'provoking the father, while in an alliance with the daughter'.

As noted earlier, there seems to be tensions and contradictions when bringing to bear a gender analysis that appeared inherently limited. There was a tendency to move back to the dysfunctional family narrative that results in de-gendering. Despite these contradictions, the assessment team suggested keeping the father out of the home while receiving treatment at a specialised perpetrator's programme, with the mother being referred to a Women's Centre for support. This was a domestic violence framing. However, in the hearing, with the report available, the Court re-framed the situation as a CP case, rather than domestic violence, under the label of neglect and 'partial parenting roles non- fulfilment'. Following that framing, Team 2 was ordered to deliver an intervention to 'provide tools for the parents in the appropriate fulfilment of their roles and on conflict resolution that preserve an *adequate family atmosphere'* (emphasis added). No specific work was suggested with the father, instead, a familial approach that disregards the domestic violence involved. This case illustrates the contradictory approaches and the operation of assumptions that in the end obscure the understanding of the issues involved, which is the exercise of violence.

In the intervention process, the practitioners in charge constructed the problem as family interactions and communication, highlighting 'dysfunctional family dynamics.' The accounts of the process revealed that the mother's requests for the father to leave the house

were not seriously considered. Notes on interviews with her and the daughter revealed that they thought the father was the problem with 'his machismo and authoritarian style'. Some incidents of controlling behaviour with the mother and the daughters appeared only marginally. The mother's complaints and descriptions of her husband's machista attitudes (infidelity, controlling behaviour) were not heard nor reported to the Court.

Surprisingly, as the family had been previously involved with a Women' s Centre, under a domestic violence-based guidelines framework, the CP team sought an interagency meeting with this centre's practitioners. The notes of that meeting revealed this Centre's construction was that 'the family is dysfunctional in their interaction and with the daughters'. The practitioner from this agency reported that the couple did not adhere to the intervention conducted, 'having no interest in receiving support in order to improve their daily coexistence'. This statement coming from a practitioner working in an agency under gender violence policy guidelines echoes a familial approach while promoting the preservation of the family unit rather than visibilising the abuse of power involved in the specific situation.

From the perspective of the mother and daughter, the victims in this case, only one written account represented them. This came from the psychologist supporting the girl and making her voice clearer:

> "she and the mother were disappointed with the judicial process outcomes as the father does not change and they expected more from the judicial system. They feel it is not worth continuing with any intervention as "nothing changes"" (Health Centre psychologist report).

The feelings of not being heard and their needs not being addressed by the judicial system and the agencies involved is clearly evident in this account that revealed their expectations as not having been met. In a visit made by the social worker the tension is observable, as well as the practitioner's approach:

> "The mother suggests the situation has not changed and that some situations of infidelity have ended with a breakup. She wants her husband to leave the house. She is told to discuss the situation with her daughters and to take a decision *without disrupting family life*. She seems distressed and starts crying. She says she feels humiliated and not valued as a woman. She is told to talk in a calm way with her husband and daughters"(Social worker, team 2, case file notes case 02, emphasis added).

The preservation of the *family life* and not taking any decisions that might disrupt it appear privileged here, with the result of the mother's feelings and needs being dismissed. In the analysis of the case, the dominant construction of the situation was of the family as dysfunctional due to intolerance. The intervention undertaken was set according to the frame given by the Court and the practitioners. It did not include the mother's perspective, whose clear demand was to get separated, with the husband leaving. When in the end this happened, borne out of the mother and daughters' pressure, the final case notes on the file described 'the family atmosphere was finally calm and adequate'. By close reading of the accounts, it is made clear the mother was asking for help to get separated from her husband, with him refusing. Nobody seemed to be listening to her, despite the fact she was persistently making her point of her husband being controlling and 'machista'. The practitioners in both agencies, the CP and domestic violence services, and also the Court insisted on constructing the situation as consisting of 'dysfunctional interactions' assuming an approach that was rejected by the family as it was wrongly framing the problem and, therefore, wrongly interpreting their needs. The continuity of family life was strongly favoured and having prominence over its dissolution, something apparently resisted by the agencies involved.

This case illustrates the complexities concerning conceptualisations of domestic violence. The way competing discourses came into tension is something to be further analysed in the next chapter. Emerging in cases involving domestic violence was an approach that emphasised working on communication and conflict resolution, without addressing the abuse of power informed by a gender perspective, which was part of the frameworks for practice. By working on conflict resolution, the asymmetry involved in domestic violence cases is erased, as conflict was constructed as two equal sides in tension with each other. This is contradictory in the cases where practitioners displayed accounts of machismo and patriarchal orders being influential or of importance, but when developing interventions, a functionalist paradigm related to conflict resolution was applied.

As analysed earlier, the violence of non-indigenous men was less visible and less likely to be framed as gendered. This was different from the context of violence scenarios in Mapuche families where gender analysis, although still narrow, is made explicit and more recurrent. For instance, it was in these cases that practitioners were more often invoking the concept of empowerment for Mapuche women, mobilising them to get independent from their partners. This was different when compared to non-indigenous families, where a discourse of family preservation was more dominant.

Then, the gender analysis was interacting with different conceptualisations of the family. These differences seemed influenced by the role assigned to the culture of indigenous families, as a narrative that emphasised 'cultural background' was consistently employed. Overall, it was found that gender intertwined with ethnicity and belonging, which means, class, but also geographical location. This makes an intersectional analysis particularly pertinent.

6.3. Intersecting risk factors and dysfuntionality

This section brings together a group of narratives identified as overarching framings that practitioners employed to report the cases. They appeared interrelated, reflecting the links and associations practitioners made in relation to the issues dealt with. In the form they were expressed, some of these themes seemed shaped by the usual concerns found in the CP talks. Such is the case of 'risk factors' as a common narrative displayed, for example. The risks factors narrative was often linked to a 'dysfunctional family' and more specifically 'dysfunctional parenting'. However, according to the type of families, these specific categories appeared to conceal other themes that are outlined in this chapter as intersecting. Overall, the risk factors and dysfunctionality narratives emerged as part of the dominant concerns regarding the violations of children's rights, a theme that functioned as an overarching umbrella under which the assessment of risk factors and dysfunctionality emerged. The perceived dysfunctionality was often linked to and focussed on descriptions of dysfunctional parenting, and as seen before, on mothers.

Specific risk factors were linked to situations of Mapuche families' cases. For these families, dysfunctionality and risk factors were prevalent in the accounts, strongly associated with understandings of what practitioners mentioned as the 'cultural background', which will be developed in the following section.

6.3.1. Families' cultural background and transgenerational patterning

Within the display of practitioners'accounts of risk factors, a narrative centred on the construction of 'cultural background' was a finding associated with the Mapuche families involved. Cultural background was identified as an underlying and also overt factor behind many of the referrals made to the CP system. Cultural background referring to indigenous identity and heritage, was invoked in the construction of two main associated issues:

domestic violence and childrearing practices, whithin which dysfunctionality was constructed.

For instance, there was a problematisation of culture regarding the support of domestic violence by the Mapuche culture and its perceived 'machista' patterning. In the previous section, we have seen gender was employed regarding the enactment of patriarchy and machismo in these families. Regarding the understanding of violence, it appeared often linked to the use of 'transgenerational' (intergenerational) violence as underpinned by the 'cultural background' as the quotes below illustrate:

> "he (carer) doesn't know the boy's interests and needs, due to insisting on a *cultural and transgenerational style"* (Social worker, case files notes, case 05, team 1, emphasis added).
> "the father's family validates machismo and violence transgenerationally (social worker and psychoeducator, Court report 1, case 04, team 1).

Similarly, in the file about the case is found:

> "This *violence is transgenerational*, normalised as a child raising style" (social worker, case files notes, team 1),

Most of the practitioners' analyses of domestic violence identified this transgenerational pattern, which was perceived as an ingrained and widespread feature of these families. Although seen in some accounts for non-indigenous families, as a type of often recurred explanation linked to dysfunctionality and pathology, in this specific empirical data, it was noticeably more frequently employed for Mapuche families, as more classic forms of domestic violence were found. Within this construction as 'transgenerational', the perceived normalisation of violence within families was a key component to understand the patterning, as in the extracts from two cases below:

> "The maternal figure is undermined, not being able to protect the children as *she invisibilises and minimises the violence*" (Social worker and psychologist, court report 1, team 3, emphasis added).
> "*Normalisation of the violence is identified in the victim (the mother)*. The mother is told of having two choices:
> One, to engage with the intervention, the Women's Centre and Health centre, as ordered by the Family Court.

> Two, not to engage, followed by actions taken to provide a safe space for the children.
> An ultimatum is given to make her engage in the intervention.
> She finally agrees to take part". (Social worker, psychoeducator and team leader, cases file notes, case 04, Team 1, emphasis added).

As seen from the quote above, as in other cases, within this construction of the normalisation of violence, it was women who were more often portrayed as playing a part in the persistence of such pattern by not recognising themselves as victims and minimising/normalising the violence. In such cases, this understanding often led to the use of coercive strategies to push them to make choices under the threat of taking the children away as shown above, with the same scenario in the quote below, in the context of the father's alcohol misuse:

> "She is reminded of the dynamics of domestic violence and the importance of making reports as she is the one to guarantee protection. Any other incident of serious violence can lead to the Court deciding to keep the children in a residency, given their vulnerability without parents able to protect them. The mother replied that she wants to protect but she is afraid of the father. He has threatened her with taking the children away and keeping them from her. She is made clear that she is the one in charge of the children legally and who is accountable for them" (social worker, case files notes, case 06, team 3).

As already outlined before, women were mostly found responsible for the violence taking place in the family, lacking recognition of their conditions as victims. This framing here was associated with a more evident gender order, which the practitioners understood as part of the indigenous 'cultural background', applying the transgenerational explanation. However, what was missing was further analysis of the pervasive nature of gender relations by looking at its context, with the influence of indigenous understandings of gender, as discussed in the literature (see chapter three).

In one case of domestic violence (case 04, T1), before arriving to a judicial decision, the practitioners were instructed by the Court to seek the Mapuche community perspective, a measure most likely aimed at encouraging a more culturally situated approach, given the need to integrate an *intercultural perspective* (see chapter two). Following interviews with key Mapuche community leaders, practitioners learned that the Mapuche cosmovision (cosmological worldview) was contrary to the use of domestic violence, and for that reason, this specific family was somewhat marginalised within their own community. However, the

learning with the community was not an analysis integrated for this case or others, with no evidence of attempts to use indigenous community resources to address concerns and family isolation. Generally, understandings from the Mapuche perspective are not mainstreamed across practitioners in their approaches to families. As discussed in the literature (see chapter three), violence in indigenous families has been linked as intersectional and under the impact of the historical disruption following colonisation and its legacy, with the colonial violence impacting particularly within the domestic sphere. An assimilationist model has contributed to erode traditional indigenous forms of dealing with violence in their communities. What emerges is a lack of recognition of the broader context of the historical harm done to the Mapuche people as a society and how violence is intertwined with the impact of colonisation. This occurs as analysis often focusses at the individual level, disregarding contextual factors. At this level, it resulted in the identification of the 'cultural background' and the transgenerational harm only constructed in this way for indigenous families, where the cultural background is problematised and questioned. What was observed in this research is a pattern of constructing Mapuche culture as problematic, reflected in the tendency to forward the euphemistic 'cultural background explanation' for what were found as 'risks' or dysfunctional in these families. This is well illustrated in the extract of a report that follows below. This is from an assessment conducted prior to the referral of case 03, which was later handled in team 2. This case was labelled as neglect, out of the perceived 'risks factors'. The assessment team described the situation as:

> "The mother describes having been sexually abused by her father, resulting in the pregnancy of D. (the referred child) who was not legally assumed by his father. She was threatened by the father to prevent her from interposing a paternity legal sue (…)
>
> In the current situation, *the children are within a socio-cultural context with Mapuche characteristics, living in a community along with extended maternal family, where risk factors are observed.* These are related to alcohol consumption, in association with conflictive family relationships and arguments with others (…) In relation to the boundaries, these are diffuse, being part of *the transferral of transgenerational patterns of child raising, with records of an enmeshed family where boundaries are constantly transgressed, with normalisation and minimisation of violation of rights of their members. At the same time there is tolerance to affective relationships between close relatives, a situation considered as a risk factor, as they do not regard it as a violation of rights*.

From a gender perspective, the mother is looking after the children. However, the masculine figure is seen from a materialist self-interest view to ensure economic stability, which reflects a dependency towards men.

Decision making suggested:

The children should remain with the mother, who is found as having *partial marental dysfunctionality*, despite having an attachment to her children and adherence to the process. To keep the custody the mother must:

-Receive alcohol misuse assessment and treatment if needed as it is interfering with the *marental role.*

-Be referred to "Nobody is perfect" programme from the Chile Crece Contigo scheme, to receive advice and orientation regarding the maternal role".

They also will be referred to PPF (Focused Prevention Programme). (Social worker and psychologist, assessment team, emphasis added)

The report made clear the understanding of the 'risks' as coming directly from the family dynamics where the transgenerational is linked to child rearing norms and the type of relationships within the family. It is worth noticing the outcome of depicting maternal *dysfunctionality* and also the referral to a scheme called "Nobody is perfect", aimed at parenting skills. A construction is made behind this framing. For this case, the case file notes of the intervention team described the case as:

> "the referred child was born out of the incestuous relationship that the mother had with her father, resulting in an unplanned pregnancy. The mother describes a forced relationship that lasted in time, driven by economic dependence" (social worker, case files notes, team 2).

Firstly, the situation was portrayed in a way that obscures the mother's condition as a victim. Saying 'the child was born out of the incestuous relationship the mother had with the father resulting in an 'unplanned pregnancy' does not emphasises the fact she was a victim of sexual abuse perpetrated by her father, resulting in a pregnancy. The language use erases the abusive relationship to frame it as a consensual. This may be the result of the mother's own account, who was possibly herself unaware of being a victim of an abusive relationship, with power exercised by the abuser, the common scenario in intra-familial abuse. However, the professional account was not naming the situation for what it is, implying in a subtle way the mother is also responsible, as the situation is framed within the 'Mapuche culture and the

transgenerational' patterns narrative. This resulted in problematising the patterns of the culture, but not focusing on the harm to the mother and her condition as a victim.

The psychoeducator working with the two children involved in this case, acknowledged in the interview to having felt shocked by this situation, which may explain the need to keep the abuse out of sight. The two practitioners handling the case regarded it as one of the most complex cases they had. The psychoeducator put it clearly as:

> Interviewee: "They came from a context with enormous sociocultural deprivation, from the most distant area here in L. (location). On the one hand, there was no valuing of education, we may say that they were true *savage children* when they came here! The challenge was to re-educate these children..."
>
> R. Humm...
>
> Interviewee. "...it was to situate them in this society, a bit strange to them…" (interview with the psychoeducator, team 2).

This case illustrates the extent of the construction of cultural norms as dysfunctional or abnormal and a discourse that put not only the blame on the individuals but in their culture, as something that underpins the analysis. Here the shift from being centred on individual pathology or dysfunctionality, as in the other cases, to a narrative that pathologises 'cultural background' is noteworthy.

Some practitioners from two of the teams reflected on the fact that some Mapuche families are wrongly referred when concerns have been raised out of the tendency in some professionals and agencies to construct cultural practices as neglect or risk. The clearest example is the issue of hygiene and clothing, which is illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview with a social worker (SW):

> SW: For instance, ehh, (…) one colleague, one day we were on a visit, she is from another institution, not from here, we were there and all the children were barefoot….
>
> R. Right
>
> SW. With mud.
>
> R. getting muddy, right.
>
> SW. And that is like ... is normal within the culture. In all the traditional ceremonies people are barefoot...
>
> R. Right, being barefoot, yes.
>
> SW. Barefoot, to that professional it was like... she was shocked!

R. right...

SW. Hygiene (hum). What is happening here? Don't they have any shoes?!

Two other practitioners mentioned other examples of the same issue. The issue, ostensibly that concerns over hygiene or clothing were misinterpreting cultural norms that do not represent harm to the children or posing any risk for the Mapuche. However, in different agencies such as in the health or social services, some cases were constructed as neglect as these cultural traits were framed by invoking urban middle class Chilean non-indigenous norms. We can observe the clash emerging from different conceptualisations of child raising. For the Mapuche people, being barefoot in the countryside is normal as it has always been, long before the Chileans settled in their territory. However, practitioners and agencies tend to assess their child-rearing style against a dominant Chilean model that has roots in the Spanish colonisation that brought a Western model that became the dominant, while ignoring structural inequalities coming precisely out of this domination and violent disruption of the Mapuche's living standards.

In Team 3, regarding case 03, a Mapuche family living in deprived conditions in the countryside was assessed by the social worker against such standards:

> "Deprived living conditions, four beds that get prepared to sleep on the floor. Water is coming from a well outside the house, there are no toilet facilities inside the house (…) The children do not have habits for keeping themselves clean, even though there is a lot of dust around due to dry weather conditions. Guidelines are provided" (Social worker, case files notes, case 03, Team 3).

The practitioner made the home visiting in the countryside where she noted the dust around due to dry weather conditions, added to the fact that water was taken from a well outside, which probably was not in full supply as in dry conditions water supplies get scarce in that location. Additionally, the family was not accessing toilet facilities, which is common in poor rural southern Chile. However, the assessment of "hygiene habits" did not consider those structural factors. This introduces the need to reflect on such approaches where cultural judgments appear to mask social deprivation.

Another extract from a report sent to Court regarding a case of a Mapuche family continued with a similar portrayal:

> "From an intercultural approach, the mother is from an indigenous background identifying herself as Mapuche. She uses traditional herbal medicine from a Machi[34] following the beliefs and trying to justify her neglect through this by invoking "harm received"[35] from people who don't like her. The family is not regarded as trustworthy as there is no recognition of the abuse reported, with deficient awareness of the needs of protection and care of the children. The mother is only engaged based on the statutory measure but not because of feeling the need of the process for her and her children. Tha being that the case, the prognosis will depend not only on the engagement but on the active integration of the aims of the intervention (…)" (social worker and psychologist, Team 3, Court report 1, case 03).

This reflects a judgment on Mapuche cultural beliefs. In the specific case, it served to maintain the blaming narrative while lacking awareness of the context and the indigenous cultural heritage. Different sources of discrimination against Mapuche families operated to prevent systematic support. For instance, one team leader mentioned practitioners' biases against a family constructed as incapable of change, while assessing concerns over femicide. In the end, the intervention, in that case, was successful. Another issue was the perception of mapuche people as "terrorists", as the media and State's criminalising discourse portrays them, with one professional in a school unwilling to seek help from the Court as he feared the family could set fire to the school in revenge. The practitioners acknowledged these prejudiced attitudes within the local community but were somehow unable to see beyond their own biases within the interventions they were putting forward.

Another issue within the constructions of the cultural background was a finding related to barriers in communication. The practitioners also identified this as emerging from the 'cultural background', as reflected in this excerpt from an interview with a social worker:

> S.W. "…that case was very complex because of *the intercultural issue, she had low educational skills and a strong Mapuche identity* (…) there were some objectives that I could simply not achieve with her, for example, topics about gender in workshops, no, that sort of things, no, and I tried but she said: "I don't understand" and she was very grumpy…(social worker, team 2, emphasis added).

[34] Machi is a kind of shaman in the Mapuche culture, often a female figure, but sometimes a male. It is a spiritual leader that uses the knowledge of herbal medicine to heal and contribute to the well-being of the community. Machis lead ritual ceremonies for the Mapuche God within Mapuche traditions and are central for the community.

[35] Harm (mal in Spanish) is referring to the Mapuche belief that harm can be done by someone else using the power of witchcraft to make the person targeted feel unwell or in getting in trouble.

The practitioner reflected in the interview how she struggled with this Mapuche mother to get her to understand what she was trying to address with her, which was the social construction of gender, something perhaps a bit too abstract for the mother. The issues of communication were then constructed as a problem with the mother and her background rather than the practitioner's skills. The practitioner stated overtly that the cultural aspect was making the case one of the most complex she had. The mother later raised the issues of communication with the other practitioner of the dyad team. The team then, after discussing it came out with different strategies to address the barriers in communication and as a result, the intervention could continue making progress. At the same time, they realised the need to understand the Mapuche families' approach to building relationships and how the traditional office environment was inappropriate as they felt more comfortable in their own open spaces such as the kitchen garden in their houses. Subsequently, home visiting rather than highly structured and planned sessions at the programme' s office was more effective and engaging, pushing the practitioners to be more flexible in their strategies. In this case, it is important to mention in this case, the mother was forced to leave her community following practitioners' concerns regarding the 'risks factors' for the children in the extended family (see p. 135). With this mother being a Machi (see footnote 34) having to move away was problematic, from the Mapuche perspective, as Machis are key traditional authorities that fulfil an important role regarded as spiritual guidance for their communities in Mapuche society.

This raises the issue of cultural competence as it emerged from different narratives. Some practitioners acknowledged having felt overwhelmed by cultural barriers in the handling of cases of Mapuche people, revealing a need for training in that area, which is an important point for further analysis.

Finally, regarding the persistence of the use of the narrative of cultural background, in some cases, culture was part of the argument to understand and even excuse men for their violence, emphasising culture as the overarching problem. For instance, in case 01 in Team 1, analysed in chapter five (p.100), and involving domestic violence. In the interview the psychologist reflected on the resistance of the father and his style as being part of his *cultural background* as Mapuche, having been raised within an authoritarian normative system, reflected in the type of masculinity enacted within the family. Taking the cultural background here served to describe a resistance to change. As in the other two teams, speaking about *micro-achievements* with men exercising violence was a narrative of lowering expectations regarding these men, and what it is more complex within this thinking, is the assumption that 'cultural background' is fixed and monolithic, and as a result justifying practitioner' low

expectations. Some of them explicitly said the cases of Mapuche ethnicity were beyond their professional expertise. The danger of constructing cultural background as fixed, monolithic and not subject to change may lead to buttressing biased and stereotyped views of the Mapuche people, associated with the prejudices in the Chilean society. Underlying issues of ethnicity, class and belonging must be considered in the analysis of the practitioners' encounters with these families. There seem to be a tendency to develop constructions of special, difficult cases, deviant from the norm. However, the evidence reviewed here does not support such assumptions. It can be concluded that the men that participated more in the interventions, given the Courts were more coercive with them, were the Mapuche men. The interventions in those cases ended with positive outcomes, bearing in mind a follow up would tell of their maintenance in the longer term. However, something clear is that these were the men having more encounters with the practitioners compared to non-indigenous men, having also been part of other interventions such as in the health centres. Therefore, these were the men more in touch with services and the Courts, and subject to more control.

This involves the practitioners' skills to develop approaches which are culturally situated. This is something that indeed has been identified and visualised by the policy guidelines, as the teams are requested to integrate an *intercultural perspective*, as explained in chapter two. However, and despite some basic training provided, it becomes clear this has not been successful as the practitioners were aware of the challenges they face without guidance, as it was the case regarding the integration of the gender perspective.

6.3.2. Gendered mental health issues

Another issue that emerged in the narratives as a factor was mental health issues, a concern mostly in relation to women. In the general sample, some situations regarding affective disorders, emotional distress and in some cases perception of degrees of learning disabilities were identified as underlying factors impacting parenting capacity. At the same time, mental health concerns around diagnosis made by the health centres involved in cases also played a role within the practitioners' constructions of families' problems. Mothers were found with symptoms of depression, personality disorders in several cases, compared to men, who, as discussed, were referred to mental health services for alcohol misuse, mostly of Mapuche ethnicity.

Mental health issues were consistently found in those women that had histories of victimisation and therefore had been previously referred to mental health support, before the CP referrals. In many cases, as seen in some of the accounts, the emotional harm was

invisible as well as the mother's help-seeking, where no referral to support was made and some women with symptoms went unsupported. Such was the case of a mother in case 1, team 3 who reported auditive hallucinations, where these issues were not addressed. As said above, the practitioners were aware of the need to provide support for the mothers, but that was something they felt incapable of addressing within the organisational constraints supposed to provide support primarily for the children. They pointed out the failings of the network available and especially the health sector's lack of resources to be a stable and efficient provider. This was pointed out by the practitioners themselves as a failing regarding the lack of enough support and given the impact on parenting. In spite of the relative invisibility, there was a pattern of mental health issues identified mostly in women, and evident in the analysis of case files.

From an intersectional perspective, it is worth mentioning that in several cases, mental health issues were linked to perceived non-diagnosed learning disabilities, something that was mentioned in several cases as a barrier to the intervention. They were particularly referring women from rural communities, and especially of Mapuche belonging, where a mix of issues can be described. One example is made clear in the quote below:

> "The mother does not play an authority role, though she is viewed as a significant figure. She is not educating in habits, being neglectful. This may be related to her deficient abilities, derived from deprivation and transgenerational harm (abandonment, neglect, domestic violence) as well as a lack of education and the depression she has experienced" (social worker, team 3).

This was a Mapuche mother in a case where her neglect was identified in hygiene conditions for her three children, but mostly regarding the denial of the sexual abuse by the father, who was away with a restraining order. The abuse, having not being substantiated, was subsequently dropped from criminal prosecution. What was substantiated was domestic violence that the mother had experienced followed by depressive symptoms in treatment at the health centre. It is necessary to highlight from the quote the construction of her supposed deficient abilities, also highlighted in another excerpt, not reproduced here. This construction was later found under question when she got a good job and the final report mentioned significant progress in her personal development. However, there were other cases of women found with some sort of cognitive disabilities. In the three teams, descriptions of women as having cognitive disabilities were found as an issue interfering with effective communication

within the intervention. These were consistently those women from rural, deprived areas and of Mapuche ethnicity. Some quotes from the interviews revealed these constructions:

> "There was a lot of dependency towards this man, and she had very limited personal skills, but also at a cognitive level, and that made the process very difficult, it was necessary to get to very basic things with her… it was very difficult to get her to understand what the session was about". (social worker, team 3)

A further contributing factor, missing from the case files but reflected in the interviews by some of the practitioners is poverty, suggesting the impact as less predominant within their analysis, which is also reflected in the limited recording of socio-demographic data regarding social conditions such as income, living conditions, etc. As seen in the data, there was more focus on individual or familial factors, overlooking the structural inequality and lack of resources. This is important, considering the region where the teams operate has been historically the poorest of the country (see chapter two). This has clearly led to structural deprivation and a stark lack of opportunities for human development in many areas, including educational opportunities and cognitive stimulation. Deprivation and a lack of educational training, within a context of extreme poverty and segregation, may be factors behind this perceived disability or even some issues regarding processes of acculturation that were less visible for the practitioners. For the Mapuche families overcoming issues associated with acculturation was a challenge and it may be the case that more than learning disabilities these barriers materialised in communication for instance. Also, it must be said, the Mapuche have their own indigenous language, even though assimilationist strategies have forced them to speak Spanish. This may constitute a challenge, especially considering the tendency in practitioners to employ the jargon and the technical language of CP. Another issue was that in two cases of Mapuche women they faced anxiety and difficulties in getting to the programmes' offices for intervention sessions as a result of not being familiar with the city, having never been there before, and having trouble with using transport, for instance. It is certainly contentious whether the perceived cognitive disabilities were such or more associated with acculturation issues and the challenges of handling the complexities of the dominant culture when only used to the rural indigenous community context.

An intersectional analysis helps to understand that the families where violence is seen as more critical, with the burden of alcohol misuse and lack of community resources are precisely those living in rural areas, belonging to indigenous communities and where the lack

of support and opportunities were having an impact on their daily lives and particularly in term of mental health issues. The issue of alcohol misuse may be linked to this analysis, given its prevalence in this context.

6.3.3. Alcohol misuse

Alcohol misuse as a risk factor was found predominantly in the accounts of Mapuche families (5 cases). Even though the practitioners informed alcohol misuse was a prevalent issue, few references were found in non-indigenous families. With the Mapuche men, alcohol misuse was mostly addressed from a medicalised perspective by forcing them to engage with treatments at the health centres, as ordered by the Courts. This approach was part of the most coercive measures recommended to the Courts regarding issues to address with men, compared to the rest of the families, where fewer legal measures were sought. Regarding this factor, it was mainly men that were found to be involved in alcohol misuse, with this being linked in many cases to domestic violence. However, there were two cases of Mapuche mothers, where alcohol misuse was an issue involved in the referrals. These will be described in more detail. It is important to mention this was a relevant finding in this research in relation to understanding the involvement of CP services with this population. It is also necessary at this point to offer some contextualisation. Alcohol misuse has for a long time served to reinforce negative attitudes and prejudices that support discrimination, part of an openly racist discourse that permeates Chilean society (see chapter three). Only recently is it becoming visible and addressed as a mental health issue within this population, after being historically neglected within public policies. For this research, it must be mentioned as an area to explore further as it has been associated with the persistence of violence dynamics and now, as a result, one likely factor behind the number of Mapuche families coming into the CP system.

Whilst most cases where alcohol misuse is an intervening factor involved men, specific cases of mothers were referred too. One is the case introduced in previous section (p.135) involving a lone mother caring for her two young children, referred under the label of maternal neglect. This followed allegation of sexual abuse perpetrated by a relative against her daughter that were not substantiated. In this case, the mother's alcohol misuse was posed as a concern, but in the end, no evidence was found. Her family network was posed as a risk factor associated with alcohol misuse. The emphasis on the 'risks factors' within her family and indigenous community, force her to stay away from them. In turn, this displacement resulted in the mother finding herself isolated and with a lack of resources within an urban

environment after being brought up in the countryside according to her cultural background as a Mapuche. This was the Mapuche woman in the role of Machi for her community, which as mentioned already, is a problematic issue for the community as well. In the interview, the practitioners acknowledged the situation was harsh for the mother. However, the concern regarding alcohol misuse was kept during the process:

> "On the other hand, *as a risk factor is identified the visiting of the family in the countryside, as she exposes her children to where there is alcohol consumption as well as family conflicts".* (Social worker, case 03, team 2, case file notes, emphasis added)

The issue of alcohol consumption posed was not seen in her behaviour but was for the relatives. However, there was no attempt to address the issue with them, given the close ties that the children had with the family. The suspicion on her and the family kept the intervention process for so long (ordered by the Court) that not only the mother but the team doing the intervention ended up fatigued and jaded, as the practitioners reflected on the interview. Here it is important to note the intersection of the concern over alcohol misuse in the context of an indigenous woman, living in poverty and deprivation, deep-rooted discrimination, a lack of educational skills, in addition to being a single mother as a result of a history of sexual victimisation. All these intersecting sources of inequality were constructed as risk factors, with the strategies focussed mostly on controlling her, without addressing the sources of the problem.

The second case involving female alcohol misuse as a concern was also of Mapuche ethnicity, in another team (case 04, Team 3). In this case, the mother was constructed as capable to have her daughter back after the child having been with a foster family. The referral was made due to a suspicion of sexual abuse committed by a mother's partner during the period she was involved in alcohol misuse, and where also domestic violence episodes had occurred. This was one of the few examples where the strengths and personal skills of the mother were more emphasised than the failures leading to positive outcomes. Although still within the discourse insisting upon the *marental role* as paramount, the approach was supportive and understanding as the following excerpt shows:

> "Even though there is a history of domestic violence and alcohol misuse by the mother and her past partners, these problems have been eradicated from the family dynamics. In the current situation there is social support and an ability to identify risk factors and prevent

them, promoting the protection, and having empathy towards her daughter". (social worker and psychologist 1, Court report 1).

The account of the process of intervention is consistent in revealing achievements made in relation to the mother's effort to improve the living conditions for her children and within that, the supportive atmosphere involved in the approach to the case. However, there was the issue of staff turnover. This revealed the impact that personal constructions may have in shaping interventions, as the quote below reflects:

> "She is invited to reflect upon the importance of being empathetic towards her children's needs. It is important to mention that during the session, she showed an adequate level of self-criticism, recognising that she made important mistakes in the caring of her children, mostly associated with the immoderate alcohol consumption she had and which she does not want to repeat again. In her discourse, it is seen that she is coming to terms with the harm she did to her children, her maternal failures and especially her irresponsibility with alcohol consumption in the past" (social worker case files notes, case 04, team 3).

The team taking the case returned to the dominant blaming discourse, highlighting the mother's responsibility for the abuse of the child, due to the alcohol misuse, while undervaluing all the progress the mother had already made. As we can see from this quote, the second social worker went back to the deficit model, highlighting the failings of the mother and the blame rather than her strengths. As the intervention was already coming to an end, it did not have much impact on the positive outcomes.

There is room to reflect on these two different approaches, and especially to consider the constructions around alcohol misuse by the Mapuche families. In general, as set out earlier, prejudiced attitudes exist in Chilean public discourse regarding the use of alcohol in Mapuche people. This may have an influence on practices, as more concern is placed upon mothers'misuse. What is interesting in this case is that it is an example of different constructions on the same situation, revealing the display of competing discourses within one team. One understanding and supportive, less biased, and the usual narrative we have seen so far, biased and blaming. This is creating space for different approaches to be put in practice, taking into consideration structural inequalities (e.g. a lone Mapuche mother, in a rural area, lack of education and support, etc.), which offer new insights to discuss, in the interplay of

gendered constructions in the context of Mapuche families. This is further explored in the following section that adds location as another important element to consider.

6.4. Gender roles and Mapuche diáspora[36]

One intersecting source of identity and inequality, seen as a strong marker, was location or geographical belonging. For the Mapuche families it is a rather different experience living in the countryside within the indigenous community compared to living in the city, facing acculturation to the dominant Chilean culture. It should be mentioned here that a significant number of Mapuche people had moved to urban areas pushed by extreme poverty conditions. This was reflected by the practitioners that portrayed a stronger Mapuche identity for those families living in rural areas, compared to Mapuche families in urban areas and more assimilated to mainstream culture. In rural areas interventions were viewed as more complex.

Although migration was not a significant issue across the whole sample, it emerged in shaping some key situations directly reflected on how parenting was perceived. They also deserve to be analysed as intersecting. Migration was mainly associated with labour opportunities that forced fathers and to a much lesser extent mothers to move in search for jobs. For instance, in one case, the practitioners described the family as 'nomadic' as moving following job opportunities that were always, unskilled, precarious and unstable. In terms of the impact of this on the interventions, there was relatively more engagement of Mapuche men seen in the sample as their main labour activity is informal, basic agriculture or low skills jobs that offer the flexibility to accommodate schedules that may haven been difficult in other cases. This was countered, however by the fact that this precarious job patterning often forces them to move to make their living. For instance, some fathers were irregular in their interventions due to some periods in other cities, then moving to another, etc. This makes room for some analysis regarding the differences observed in the family dynamics, impacted upon by intersecting inequalities associated with location and belonging, in rural and indigenous communities and their impact on gender norms.

To illustrate further some of the elements analysed, a case will be introduced as it presents a different pattern to those discussed and opens an analysis of constructions of culture. It is a case that challenges the gender order in the Mapuche context and for the

[36] The *Mapuche diáspora* has been documented as the process of rural to urban internal migration of Mapuche people. Some scholars have analysed the gendered pattern *(*Rain, 2018*)*, as it has been the case mainly of women who had left their homes in rural southern Chile to arrive at the urban capital city of Santiago to take work as in- house nannies for middle and upper-class families, since colonisation.

Chilean model as well. This case within a highly traditional context (rural, indigenous community) is an example of how gender regimes can become blurred and contested in the context of intersecting inequalities. It also shows that, contrary to general practitioners' constructions, Mapuche gender norms are not necessarily fixed. This is the case of an adolescent of 15 years old whose main carer was a maternal uncle, situated in a Mapuche rural community. The parents had left, but there was only mention of the mother. She had left to work in the Capital city as a nanny when the boy was a baby, leaving him with the maternal grandmother (who later passed away) and the uncle, who became the carer. The referral was made by another relative after finding the boy had been beaten by the carer. The court relabelled the case as neglect instead of physical abuse, minimising and downgrading it. The team handling the case constructed the issue as the emerging conflict from generational barriers between the male carer and the adolescent. The construction emphasised his developmental stage and not the parenting capacity of the uncle, who was described as tired. Here, the dominant approach of assigning blame to the carer (who was usually the mother) did not occur, as the construction was around the burden derived from the boy's developmental stage and its attendant challenges. The problem was constructed as derived from a *cultural background* (uncle) that prevents a close relationship within a *machista learning process.* In this way, it identified the tiredness of the uncle given the absence of a maternal figure. In this case, the intervention was carried out with the uncle, as there was no choice, having no female figures available, something that the social worker (SW) acknowledged as problematic:

> SW: A special case...
>
> R. yes, it is...
>
> SW: As it is a family from a context… a Mapuche context, but it also associated with religious beliefs, with the absence of...
>
> R: the absence of the mother...
>
> SW: with the absence of the mother and a female figure, which is for the culture, within the Mapuche culture is like... is (laugh), how to put it...? very complex as there are roles, there are roles to be fulfilled, the man fulfils the breadwinner role, the woman fulfils the protective role with the children, the housekeeping, the feeding, then, here is Mr. A. who...
>
> R. yes, who does…
>
> SW: he fulfilled two roles…

This case allowed me to have an authoritative account on gender norms within the Mapuche culture as explained by the social worker, clearly aware of these norms. What the experience of this case is offering is reflecting on the possibility of disentangling gender norms, which questions the shared feeling amongst the practitioners regarding culture, especially the Mapuche as too rigid and resistant to change. For this case, the practitioner reflected in the interview that, traditionally, in the Mapuche community, men's maculinties become under question when assuming roles expected for women. However, this carer was not concerned about that. Also, it was illuminating the way the intervention tried to introduce a display of the parenting role that is more empathetic, sensitive and caring, the discourse that was only posed for women in all the other cases of the sample. In the interview with him, the practitioner did mention it as the strategy employed. This was a different and interesting approach given the context with all the assumptions behind it, where the idea that gender norms or gender regimes can be disentangled, and men have the capacity to become nurturing carers emerged.

What makes the case particular is the different pattern it assumed. Almost at the end of the intervention, the mother returned, having been the victim of domestic violence with her current partner. She was received by her brother with her three little children. Once stabilised, she later returned to the capital city to take a good job offer. Despite being questioned by the practitioners and the blaming discourse again operating regarding her role with the other children (who were then referred to the programme), it was understood that she was the main breadwinner. This subverted the traditional gender regime, as the uncle continued as the main carer, now also with these younger children.

As we can see from this case, taken as an example for its uniqueness, gender, culture, race and class are highly intertwined and we cannot avoid an intersectional perspective. This woman is one example of the female Mapuche diaspora (see footnote 36), a pattern highly ingrained in Chilean society as described in chapter three. In some cases, these women had left children behind to the care of their relatives, usually their own mothers or other women in the family. The practitioner in the interview explained that this mother followed that path and reflected on the precariousness as a driving force.

> SW: well, she commented that she had left for a job, somehow we have to acknowledge that 10, 15 years ago, the age of C. (…), there was a lack of accessibility and given the context, the economic context, the context of the region, even more so being from R.H (rural town), it was very tough to access a job, and furthermore, I don't think there were the same transport

> facilities there are now (…).[yes]Then, I think that is an issue, she says she went to work in Santiago, full time, as in-house nanny, which was the best choice for her, she could not afford a job that involves travelling every day, then, to tell the truth, living in the South, Santiago will always be like the Promised land…(interview with social worker 1, Team 1)

However, despite the case being differently handled as said, non-blaming with the male carer, emphasising a more empathetic and closer style with him, the narrative of the mother blaming was still operating when constructing her as privileging the economic needs over the emotional ones, as some notes in the file expressed. The practitioner was trying to reflect in the interview regarding the gender order that perhaps the two roles are difficult to perform (the carer and the provider). The mother was also portrayed as neglectful for leaving suddenly with her children and getting them to miss the school. This was when escaping the domestic violence scenario.

In contrast, the uncle, having provided help in the past, with the raising of C. (the boy referred) and now receiving the mother again with her children, was depicted as a great man doing a great job, being praised for that. As previously mentioned, this was the second case of the 18 where a non-blaming approach was developed. On the one hand, it follows the narrative of minimising men's violence, as in the episode of beating the boy, the reason for referral was downgraded to neglect instead of physical abuse. On the other hand, it must be said the practitioners' assessment is that he was able to change attitudes and even collaborate with the intervention. A key factor seems to be the social worker, being male and engaged in a more sensitive approach to culture. This reflects how key an awareness of cultural norms may be for interventions with Mapuche people in relation to culturally sensitive approaches. This will be part of further analysis in the discussion chapter.

Summary

This chapter has introduced an analysis of practitioners' constructions of cases as shaped by the intersections of different sources of identity. In addition to gender as a marker for the constructions of parents, ethnicity, class and geographical belonging appeared influencing the display of different approaches according to these categories. The framings given to the CP concerns displayed revealed that different and particular explanations and strategies were adopted with Mapuche families compared to non-indigenous. There was a much clearer appeal to the construction and identification of 'risk factors' as ostensively more prevalent within indigenous contexts. As the salience of scenarios of domestic violence

was more prevalent in indigenous families, gender conceptualisations were employed to make sense of their gender relations and child-rearing practices. The gender perspective analysis was more explicit and emphasised while remaining much more obscured and contradictory in non-indigenous families.

Lack of practitioners' cultural competence emerged as a source of bias, reflected in the attribution of risk factors to the cultural background of Mapuche families. The ways cultural heritage tended to be constructed as problematic, reveals tensions that are part of a wider social discourse that regards Mapuche people as different in negative connotations, perpetuating assimilationist and oppressive practices, with some awareness in some of the practitioners interviewed.

In general, power relations were more overt with these families through the more recurrent use of legal coercive measures, compared to non-indigenous families. This, in turn, revealed men's masculinities were subject to different constructions and, despite an overarching dominant narrative centring on the mother's role was still side-lining men, the Mapuche men were the less invisible, as more formal control was conducted using legal mechanisms. These findings, along with the constructions found in the previous chapter provide clues on the discourses surrounding policy and practice, which provides the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN
A CDA of professional discourses

7.1 Introduction

The preceding two chapters outline the key themes articulating the nuances pertaining to constructions of parents/carers. Building upon these, this chapter develops a CDA of those themes identified. The focus is on exploring how practitioners' constructions reflect the enactment of discourses within professional practices and how this process occurs. CDA, as discussed in the methods chapter, focusses on revealing hidden assumptions and ideology, which is played out in language as a site of power relations (Fairclough, 2003). Within such analysis, an identification of the ideological underpinnings embedded within narratives is part of an interpretive process. To accomplish this task, the chapter is informed by Fairclough's approach to CDA as outlined in the methods chapter.

The interpretive analysis presented here has two main parts. First, there is an analysis of the dialectical process by which the discursive constructions are built as departing from the organisational culture of CP. In the second section, the key discourses found are analysed with references to evidence for the argument made. This chapter argues that different interrelated discourses supported the enactment of a gendering process that resulted in the endorsement of a mothering ideology and the exoneration of men's failings, which also at times intersects with race.

7.2. The dialectical process of constructing CP cases and its discursive nature

As claimed by Fairclough (1995) "discourse practice is a social practice" (p.133). This is played and produced within a context, shaping it. This shaping is reflected in texts, which can be written or oral communication. This was the focus of this research, a textual analysis of narratives of CP practitioners as discursive practices. The discourses that arose appeared shared across the three participating teams, as they were using a conceptual framework, theories and, more specifically, categories that are part of the language employed in CP settings globally. However, there are some specific features particular to Chile, not found in other CP contexts. Such is the case of the conceptualisation of the *marental role*, introduced in previous chapters.

It is important to note that, as explained before, corpus data revealed accounts coming from the participant teams, but also the reports of assessment teams assisting the Courts

referrals' decisions. Also, some Court statements were available and have been included in the previous chapters, offering a broader picture of the functioning of the system.

As reviewed, practitioners emphasised categories and language that seemed shared within this occupational culture, revealing key concerns and understandings. By examining more closely the use of this language as it was employed in the narratives it is possible to explore what lies behind the construction of cases, whose voices are considered and thus, are impacting upon that construction.

7.2.1. The categorisation process as a discursive practice

There is a distinct use of jargon in the Chilean CP work, underpinned largely by the framing provided by organisational guidelines. However, one issue noticed is that the intervention teams, despite not necessarily following the same guidelines employed by the assessment teams shared the same type of language. This is, for instance, particularly evident in the emphasis on the role of mothers identified as the *marental role*, as the evidence revealed. As mentioned, this conceptualisation is part of Barudy's parenting capacity assessment guide (see chapter two, p. 21, footnote 10), commonly used by the assessment teams in their parenting capacity assessments. Although the intervention teams choose their preferred theoretical frameworks, which tended to be mostly the ecological model, system theory and attachment, the use of Barudy's conceptualisation of parenting also appeared in the accounts. The consistent use of the concept of *marental role* reveals that Barudy's framework continues informing practices, despite recent procedural guidelines attempting to introduce other frameworks for parenting capacity assessment, as explained in chapter two. This is an analysis of the level of frameworks for practice used. From a CDA exploration, we can wonder to what extent the influence of shared meanings and understandings across practitioners and organisations makes space for the category of *marental role* becoming so firmly rooted. In that sense, it seems that other forms of assessment and categorisations have faced more resistance or at least are making less sense for the practitioners in the process of constructing the cases. It seems plausible to think that the choices of adhering to certain categorisations are related to discourses that are displayed, in this case regarding families and particularly regarding parents, which are examined here.

The use of categories is relevant in this research as it is concerned with dominant discourses and the way, through language, these are reproduced to privilege determined framings to the cases. Table 3 shows the categories most represented in the accounts according to the descriptions that were associated with them.

Table 3. Categories commonly found in the files

Associated with accounts of women	**Associated with accounts on men**	**Family accounts**
Protective role Marental role Appropriate role Dysfunctional parenting. Neglect. Maternal neglect Empowerment Normalising violence Mental health issues	Patriarchal Machismo Cultural background Alcoholism Violence	Dysfunctional family Dysfunctional parenting. Transgenerational violence. Risk factors. Violation of rights. Norms and boundaries, child rearing Domestic violence Child abuse/maltreatment

These categories were found in the identification of the themes of the previous chapters as part of the recurrent narratives employed. The sharing of categories becomes reflected in the organisational aspects that serve that purpose. The practitioners in this research mentioned the importance given to the weekly case analysis they regularly had in team meetings or the informal *case-talks* the dyad teams were seeking daily to set an integrated strategy within the interventions. As explained in chapter two, dyad teams are often comprised of a social worker, developing interventions with families and a psychologist or a psychoeducator developing the interventions with the children referred. Subsequently, in informal and formal meetings they discuss cases and share information collected by each of them separately aimed at setting agreed and unified strategies with families. There were also the formal weekly general team meetings. One significant finding is the importance young practitioners assigned to these spaces. They tended to regard them as valuable regarding the learning process they experienced in acquiring the competence they felt they needed to handle and report the cases. In other words, this is the mechanism by which they get familiar with the use of the language and the procedures of this organisational culture. Thus, language use plays a role in the process of constructing shared versions to name the reality of cases. These talks are reproduced in the texts, which are the final products where this reality becomes represented. This representation is first constructed in professional talks, as reflected in the quote from an interview with a young practitioner, explaining the process of developing the written reports of cases:

> Interviewee: Yes, I believe so and I relate this directly to the teamwork that we do… as I told you, this was a case that we reviewed many times, a case that all my colleagues knew about it, not only the dyad or trio team handling it (…) back to the report, everything emerged from the professionals meetings…[o.k.] because it was all my colleagues' feedback that helped me a lot to go through the report to explaining the situation...
>
> R. Then it was constructed collectively?
>
> Interviewee: The language constructed in the process…
>
> R. a language where there was an agreed perspective? From your perspective view, for instance, did you agree?
>
> Intervieweee: It was an analysis we did every week, sometimes with... (psychologist), with (psychoeducator) but it was an analysis ending with the same points (…) but all the information we saw here in the team meetings, everyone, we already had a reality, a reality that whoever the professional might have been doing the report the same would have been written as we had the same knowledge, everything well integrated in the work team (interview with social worker, Team 1).

From this quote, there is the idea of a common understanding and language to describe the cases' reality based on shared meanings and understandings to construct cases. For them, the act of sharing the information, discussing the complexities and collectively setting the directions to handle cases was positively seen as a valuable organisational resource, as the practitioners highlighted, in dealing with complexities.

Other practitioners interviewed had the same idea of how important sharing and getting feedback was to analyse cases collectively and, more importantly, come to crucial decisions. From that finding, it became clear that practices are talked, shared, and built upon common ground to validate them and to make them social practices by which practitioners make sense and construct the social reality they handle. These constructions that make complexities understood under a determined framework and, as a result, more manageable may turn into discourses or may be informed by discourses, as will be analysed further.

The crucial role of team meetings and the collective analysis process allowing shared constructions is their function to provide practitioners with an identity as agents within the system. The valuable learning these meetings represent is related to the acquiring of professional credentials, validated in the rehearsal of the skills needed for the professional competency. This notion of competency was found to be associated with the use of the jargon of the CP culture, a specific type of language reinforced and reproduced to talk about the

families and to diagnose their problems. Examples have been outlined so far in previous chapters and summarised in table 3.

Regarding the construction of professional discourse, practitioners were found to be responding to expectations associated with the use of jargon in their accounts. One of the practitioners interviewed mentioned that their reports were reviewed by a supervisor before being sent to the courts to ensure that they were 'technical enough'. This reveals the importance given to expert 'technical knowledge' in order to appear authoritative. Thus, the use of a certain language was expected to be displayed. This took the form of a categorisation process. This may be regarded as a discursive construction, as the reality dealt with is not expected to be portrayed plainly but rather filtered through the professional discourse in action, in the form of categories that define cases within 'professional knowledge' framings. Based on that, practitioners tried to provide accounts reflecting their competence and expertise in the field. Thus, one influence on the construction of the categories and discourses is the micro organisational culture within each team. An observation is that within each team certain categories and framings were more emphasised or dominant within the building of this 'professional knowledge'. For instance, in one of the three teams, the narrative of risk factors was more recurrent than in the other two. The same occurred with narratives regarding 'the appropriate display of the role', 'transgenerational' and 'cultural background'. Even though, this was certainly influenced by the type of families approached, where, for instance, for those being more involved with Mapuche families, the culture script became more prevalent than for other teams. However, we can suggest that each organisation, through the process of collective construction comes to agree on certain scripts that become established as the authoritative categories with which to construct cases.

We must also recognise the influence of the wider CP culture. The teams are part of a broader network of agencies and other teams involved in the CP circuit to which they have to exhibit these credentials. This was, for instance, the case of the participant teams, focusing on interventions with cases referred by the Courts. These cases had previously been subject to an assessment conducted by a team aimed at that very objective. In some cases, other types of agencies such as health services and teams from the domestic violence sector were made known to the teams thoughout their accounts on the cases handled, with their versions of what the problem was, usually also in the form of categories. Here is where an interplay of understandings or constructions can occur as observed in this research. In the data collected the practitioners demonstrated differing degrees of awareness of the impact of the use of these categories. In one interview a social worker complained about the reports of assessment

they were receiving in the referrals. She expressed concern about the systematic repetitions of the same categories:

> Interviewee: Ehh, well, in general when we receive the referrals we explore, I mean, I don't know if every one of us does, but at least I do! Sometimes the referrals come with reports from DAM (assessment team) and everything, well it's just not always to be trusted, at least in my case I do not trust a lot of the reports as they are all remarkably very similar (…) [R. right]. (…) the families seem to have the same dysfunctionality or deficiency (...). Then, it is like…o.k. all the families have the same? Humm, I don't know, it makes me think a bit… [R. hum, hum, yes] ... Then, generally, I tend to trust more what the family is telling me and then I compare it with what is said in the reports from DAM (…) and the families, generally, some of them are very open and tell, some say "o.k. I did this, and for that reason the report was made" … [R. Right], in other families it gets more difficult for them to recognise, but the stories of the families shed light on what is failing (Interview SW,T2).

The practitioner implied that she trusted the families rather than other colleagues' constructions. What can be inferred from this is the recognition of a systematic rhetoric in the use of categories. In some cases, practitioners were criticising this rhetoric in other teams and openly questioning their credentials, which introduces the need to assess the validity of certain categories or the ways they have been employed. In this way, categories are recognised, often used and despite shared understandings, they can be contested as well. There was a psychoeducator and two social workers criticising the misuse of the category of neglect in the contexts of Mapuche families, where, as described in chapter six, the cultural norms of children being barefoot are interpreted as a lack of proper hygiene and care by some practitioners and therefore, labelled as neglect, usually *marental* neglect. Some practitioners, particularly those living near indigenous communities, were aware of those labels as problematic. Nevertheless, they were still adhering to them, as in other cases, they appeared influenced by the assessment reports. For example, when asking a practitioner about the type of information and specific requests for specific interventions on cases referred by the assessment teams, she mentions the work on the *marental role.*

> R. And there when you find in an assessment report this about "strengthening marental skills", what, what do you associate with that?
> Interviewee: I immediately associate that with neglect, like to some kind of... (social worker 2, T2).

By looking at the journey of the cases reviewed, it was clear that some previous assessments that reached the teams in the referrals were influencing the expectations the practitioners of the intervention teams were having regarding the cases. These were influencing the strategies implemented, especially with those assessment reports emphasising the need to reinforce the *marental role,* as the thematic analysis revealed. However, less influence was found in other cases, especially those regarding the assessment of fathers, which can be linked with the erasure of men's violence and the ways they were constructed as less relevant, as was analysed previously.

It became clear how different voices interacted and how power was implicated within a dialectical process that made the practitioners more prone to accept certain framings and constructions over others. The practitioners seemed to be using the narratives available to them, as a mechanism in the building of discourses. The context and its language shaped the type of framings selected, with scripts practitioners were using more consistently.

7.2.2. The cases construction: an analysis of Intertextuality and the orders of discourse

An analysis of the interdiscursivity aspect of discourses, as outlined in the methods chapter, revealed the interconnectedness of narratives representing versions of reality. Within such a perspective, the discourses seen in texts must be analysed in connection with the macro level of power relations enacted across the network of practices (Fairclough, 2003, p.16). In the network of CP, to a different extent, everybody is implicated in power relations. There are hierarchies and within that, discourses becoming dominant reflect hegemonic positions while other discourses can be subject to question and undermined. This occurs in the dynamics of different versions becoming opposed or contested as discourses are not static but dialectical and subject to influence in the power relations seen (Fairclough, 2003). The discourses that remain dominant take that position through a process of naturalisation relying upon shared assumptions. There seemed to be main key discourses, but as the process is active and dialectical, made in the experiences of interaction in the social world, some competing understandings exist. Some examples are presented in chapter 6, where alternative constructions of cases were displayed, as for instance in non-blaming approaches, which were marginal. I found this to be the case within the data. For instance, the differences found in the construction of a case, where a supportive, collaborative approach was opposed to a one more punitive, mother-blaming discourse. There are orders of discourse seen in the ways that competing versions sometimes emerged, even within apparent and mostly sustained shared discourses, where hegemony is revealed.

These power relations were also implicated in the language use and conceptualisations employed in the labelling of the cases, as the reality construction took the form of categories or labels applied to the causes of referral. As mentioned earlier that process involves power as long as one version is enacted, and within this area, those versions are fuelled by moral categories, through which ideologies in the form of beliefs and categorisations on families and parents become established or accepted as facts. For instance, one issue to notice is the framing of the cases and the processes of reframing, sometimes done by the Courts. For instance, back in chapter six, the non-indigenous case framed by the assessment team as a case of domestic violence, led to recommendations for the case to be addressed under such framework's guidelines and services. In this case, the Court rejected that frame and imposed a CP framing applying the label of parental neglect. This label problematised the parenting skills rather than the issues emerging from the violence exercised by the father, with the outcomes already discussed. In practice, resulting from the Court's framing, the practitioners were persuaded to focus on that version, constructing the cases as 'dysfunctional family interactions' and leaving behind a gender analysis. In fact, in some of the other cases, situations under the label of parental neglect were hiding what is domestic violence, reflecting how the labelling is privileging some constructions, or a certain type of knowledge. The practitioners explained in the interviews that the causes of referrals framed by the Courts were often very vague and unspecific, with domestic violence often hidden, and later found to be the main concern. In those situations, the concerns and focus on parenting and childrearing practices were leading to categorisations that masked and overlooked violence as the main issue. This reveals the power involved in categorisation to make dominant a certain construction.

An Intertextuality analysis revealed how cases were actively constructed and how this process was made throughout the interventions. This seemed to operate by selecting information and focussing on certain aspects while omitting others, as was clear contrasting the practitioners' internal case files notes and the reports sent to the Family Courts. The use of case files in this research was valuable in terms of having available those accounts where the construction of cases is reflected. By using Fairclough's conceptualisation of the representation of events (2003), which draws attention to the selective process of producing accounts, it became clear that there were patterns on what was selected to be reported and what was omitted in the accounts produced to the Courts. This offered insights on the assumptions made, practitioners' constructions and their influences, which in turn, influenced the Courts. For example, as shown in previous chapters, some events are misrepresented or

overstated while others are minimised. This includes the perceived failings of mothers, often overstated and the engagement of fathers, more often overestimated. There were, also, rich accounts on the internal notes with incidents, some analysis and facts that were not presented in the reports. One example is case 06 in team 1. The data extracts in table 4 below show the analysis done in relation to the construction between the practitioners 'accounts in the file notes and the report that was later provided to the Family Court following a period of the intervention process.

Table 4. Intertextuality analysis of cases

Case file notes	**Court Report**
Interview with the mother (09/2014). She (the mother) turns up to speak about an incident with the father. He was following her yesterday with the clear purpose of intimidating her. She and her family are a bit scared. She made a report to the police (social worker). Interview with the mother (10/2014). On the weekend visit of V. to his father, there was an incident between the father and his parents, who had to call the police to control his violence. She (the mother) had to go and take her son, who was very distressed about that (social worker).	The father has been in regular contact with the child. It is important to mention that over the last period, *no neglect has been seen in the parents like the one that started the referral*, being both committed to the needs of their son (…) Regarding risk factors, they continue related to *the conflicted relationship between both parents,* which, according to the mother's version is over, even though they keep a *"tortuous" relationship* (social worker and psychoeducator, Court report 2, 01, 2015)

This was the case of the father accused of trying to strangle his son, analysed in chapter five (p. 116), with the Court opting to maintain child contact, despite the risks assessed. The report quoted was produced three months after the incidents recorded in the file notes, with this information not represented and even, misrepresented. The risks mentioned were constructed in the report as a conflictive 'tortuous' relationship amongst the parents, turning them into something mutual. The two internal accounts in the file involved having to call the police, are somehow not seen as a concern regarding the alleged violence. Additionally, it was the mother who was constructed as harming the child by allowing the incidents with the father to occur. His responsibility was not an issue, as reflected in the account to the Court, as the one constructed as failing by keeping this pattern of the relationship was the mother, with the father's controlling behaviour overlooked.

As it was with other cases, by doing this type of analysis and looking at the representation of events and the relationship between texts, meaning, the internal notes and the Court reports (interdiscursivity), two main types of accounts were consistently omitted or missing in the public versions (the reports). Firstly, recognition of mothers as victims (either in their life trajectories or in the current scenarios as being victims of any form of violence) and their voices of help-seeking. The second is the fathers' failings in meeting the needs of the children and the incidents of violence they were exercising. This finding was stronger in those cases of separated parents, where fathers kept a less involved role. For instance, in Team 2, there were four cases where the parents were separated, with the mothers caring for the children. For these four cases, there were files 'notes regarding the fathers perpetrating incidents of violence and their controlling behaviour against the mothers (cases, 2, 5 and 6) in addition to not providing the food allowance as agreed at the Family Court, (cases 4, 5 and 6) and fathers not spending time with their children or not committed enough. All these accounts went systematically underrepresented, like in a process of erasure. Another type of accounts missed are the few encounters with the mothers' partners (in three cases). They too became invisible and not part of the account provided to the Courts. As seen in the data, in general, men were not part of the main descriptions.

This introduces the need to examine the discourses on parenting concerning post-separation scenarios and the gender inequality involved in these family dynamics. It was in this type of family that men's violence and failures became more easily misrepresented or in fact, erased in the versions sent to the Courts compared to those in nuclear families, which were mainly in the Mapuche families.

This process of representing the events is such a selective way, following the pattern described, may reveal two aspects: one is the function of language in the reports and also their function as products on their own. These reports are made to persuade the Courts to make certain decisions. These decisions are expected to rely on and to assume the reality of the cases as constructed by the teams in their reports. A second and crucial aspect revealed is that these reports are vehicles of sharing the assumptions upon which the cases were constructed. These assumptions are precisely behind the active process of filtering the information that the practitioners assume as relevant to report.

As explained in chapter four, implicitness, as a central component of assumptions is involved in making discourses shared. Assumptions, operating upon implicitness, provide the 'common ground' that is key in constructing shared meanings and understandings upon which ideology can be built. Following this central idea in Fairclough's (2003) CDA

approach, it is understood that assumptions can be played to reinforce particular views on what is assumed as reality, what exists, and also what is regarded as desirable (2003). What is constructed as 'desirable' involves the value assumptions, where precisely the power to reinforce constructions can be observed, reflecting ideology. Value assumptions were the type most observed in the accounts, but with variations in emphasis. For instance, some practitioners were more prone to emphasise a blaming and coercive approach that reflected the assumptions made on mothers. Therefore, this blaming process was part of a moral reasoning, with the result that mothers were morally judged. The findings reveal this was part of the CP discourse in general. However, in some teams, some practitioners were more prone to emphasising that aspect over others.

Within this type of analysis, I found that implicitness as an integral part of assumptions was seen in the practitioners' accounts and the recurrent linguistic devices employed in the interactions taking place in the interviews. For instance, '*O.K?' 'Right?' 'Let's say…', or 'you know…*' From a CDA perspective, this language articulation seemed to function to invoke valid truths, constructed to validate assumptions played out. Seen in this way, an analysis of the function of language is important to explore the constructions as reproduced in the talks, with these devices having the function of persuasion to agree with a dominant construction of reality. From the data, it seems plausible to analyse the circuit around CP with their different actors as built on assumptions in these talks. As practitioners were aware the Courts were holding expectations around their work and the accounts provided by them to make decisions. They, in turn, had their own assumptions regarding the Courts and were writing accordingly. However, in relation to the implications for the interventions with families and their outcomes, what is central to this research are the assumptions regarding parents or carers, which are examined below as leading to the discourses identified.

7.2.3 *The assumptions: the shaping of discourses*

As explained in chapter 6, narratives developed from the central CP concerns around the rights of the children and the parenting capacity of parents as overarching themes. As such, most of the assumptions emerging were, as expected, about parents. For instance, in the interviews with the practitioners, when asked about parenting in general and neutrally framed regarding parenting capacity, they more often started answering according to the assessment of parenting they did in neutral terms. This was by talking about parents in general, without specifying which of them they were thinking of in the interviews. However, through the

development of their argument they tended to end up mentioning 'the mother' or mothers. To the question:

> R: From your experience in CP and the need to address parenting in the work done with the families, what would you say is involved in parenting? What do you expect from that?
> Interviewee: I take a look at the permanent availability to exercise the role, if there are adults that are very diligent, let's say regarding the basic duties of a responsible adult, but are not emotionally available to their children, as they are fine one week, but then there is an issue with the partner, an issue with the neighbour, then it is "don't talk to me, damn kid" and that happens a lot. Then, to me, that is a sign that there is a lot to fix, that what a child needs is an attachment figure that is unconditional, no matter the circumstances. I think one of the first things I try to see is to what extent the responsible adult is, as a dangerous indicator is those adults that tend to step aside from their roles when economic situations get worse, for example. Then, they decide "I will take the child to the granny, this week, an argument with the partner, then I will take him to my sister. This produces a mess in the children, especially if they are younger than 6, when the attachment occurs (…)
> R. In what contexts do you hear that more often? From whom? Fathers? Mothers?
> Interviewee: From the mothers (interview social worker T1)

A similar pattern occurred with two other practitioners, as they responded:

> When parents, the parents or the mother, with whom the work has been done, get to display a protective role, and identify risk situations (…) get to be empathetic and not being only centred on her needs, getting to acknowledge that children have emotional needs and being capable of responding to them… (interview social worker T3).

Another practitioner when asked the same question was very critical of the category of parenting capacity, as something he disagreed with, but when the question was reframed as to what made him feel a situation with a case was good enough to think of concluding the intervention he said:

> That the mother learns how to read the child [ok], that the mother, instead of, I don't know, with the children getting to the stairs saying, "I am going to jump", that the mother instead of saying "he is having a tantrum", she says "something is happening to my child" (Interview with psychologist T3).

What is made clear in these three interview excerpts is consistent with the files regarding expectations regarding parenting as embodied in the mothers, reflecting that parenting was conflated with mothering or the *marental role*. As the practitioners were saying, the work is mostly done with mothers. At this point, when they think about parenting, naturally it is the role of the mothers that is occupying their minds, which in turn reinforces the idea of keeping the focus on them. This process also implies that in such circumstances, as women were identified in parenting duties, the blame operates consistently for them, as seen below:

> R. What kind of neglect is more frequently seen?
> I. Of basic care...
> R... but from a father or a mother or both?
> I. Ehh...I would say both parents, but it is also important to mention that we have a huge population of single parent families, not all of them are bi-parental families...
> R. Of course...
> I. Right. And if there was *at least one of the parents fulfiling the role*, the child wouldn't be in this programme ... (social worker T2, emphasis added).

In this excerpt, the practitioner stated most families are single parent, not saying openly female single parent. However, when she says, 'if there were at least one of the parents fulfiling the role', she implies the mother, but not overtly. Recurrent expressions denoted the way this operated based on beliefs assumed as implicit. This was reflected in narratives such as 'displaying the marental role' and the 'appropriate exercise of the marental role'. There seemed to be the idea that what is involved in those statements is understood and that setting such standards of parenting assessment makes perfect sense, as the meanings are assumed to be shared. What is involved in those narratives was not often specified or fully described but assumed as a common understanding, where an ideological work is implicated, the ideology of mothering assumed as natural in the 'appropriate marental role'.This standard of assessment of parenting or 'the appropriate role' was almost absent in relation to fathers, which makes the expectation of the parenting roles highly gendered, reflected in assumptions about parenthood.

7.2.4. Parenthood assumptions as discourses of motherhood

Fairclough (2003) argues that the interpretive process involved in establishing the 'fit' between the text and the world is conducted by looking at the connections with common sense assumptions found in the social context, being the work of ideology that naturalises these assumptions. In applying this analysis to this research, these taken for granted assumptions help to understand the constructions of parents, as seen in the interviews' excerpts below:

> Because anyway, a lot of cases that end up here have to do with the fact that sometimes, we as parents fail, we fail in the protective behaviour, we are guilty of over-confidence, sometimes. A father will never want something bad to happen to his child, but unfortunately, with trust, he gets careless, weakening the protective role towards the children (Social worker, T3)

An experienced practitioner when talking about the process of getting a mother closer to her son:

> And as this bond with her son got closer, she was telling us she was alert, committed to care, I don' know, such as the care one has with her own child, you check them up when they come home after a day out, she was becoming more assertive….(interview social worker, team 3).

From these excerpts, it seems practitioners became personally involved in the images constructed around parenting and the standards they set. This shows the ways the practitioners brought to bear their own constructions on parenthood/motherhood when dealing with parents in these settings as some of them explicitly stated. For instance, a practitioner explained in the interview that she found awkward that a mother insisted on the father taking the children over the weekend as agreed on child contact as she (the practitioner) believed that it was not good to impose that on the father, being better for a mother to stay with her children. This type of reasoning was particularly common among female practitioners when assessing the parenting capacity of mothers against their own standards of what it is to be a good mother. It seemed to shape their professional approaches and expectations posed for the women. For instance, although a blaming discourse was consistently found as part of most of the practitioners' approaches, with a few exceptions, the female social workers appeared consistently harsher in their accounts of mothers, as shown in

chapter 5. Their expectations seemed higher, revealing the impact such personal constructions were having in their practices and how gender is implicated.

Departing from that, practitioners seemed to be driven by cultural or personal constructions of family and parenthood, to which they adhere unconsciously when bringing their own experiences as parents. Some of them were more aware of it, while it operated more unconsciously in others. This was more the case for the older, more experienced practitioners, who have become parents and reflected on its influence in their professional approaches. Even though, hypothetically, this was also present in young childless practitioners. One of them suggested that not having the experience of being a mother was somehow preventing her from having a deeper understanding of parenting. Another young practitioner argued the need to work with parents to make them understand they have "chosen" to be parents in order to emphasise that the experience is not something that simply 'happened'. Hidden is a highly ideological narrative brought to the encounters with parents that reflects the display of assumptions on parenthood taken as common sense and becoming the discourses shaping practices. The dominant discourses and their relationship are the focus of the second part of this chapter, that continues in the following section.

7.3. The interrelated discursive constructions

Concerning discourses identified, findings suggest the overriding implication of gender in the privileged assumptions that dominate over others. An interpretive approach reveals there were subtle meanings and discourses masked by others apparently non-gendered but found gendered when examining differential expectations as seen in chapter five. This is explained in the hierarchies and orders of discourse found, as detailed in the following points. These discourses appeared mostly interrelated to the extent that they were reinforcing each other acting as a network of assumptions reflected in the discursive language. For instance, the discourse of risk factors was present, and linked to a discourse of dysfunctional families, and most specifically to dysfunctional parenting. This was in response to the overarching narrative of the children's rights violation. From a gender-neutral and, perhaps naïve, perspective those discourses may appear non-gendered. However, in the ways they were employed they became gendered as risk factors and dysfunctional parenting were categories found in the assessment of the mothers and the constructions around the fulfilment of the *marental role.*

Thus, the way I present the discourses is around this emerging gendered nature where the narratives of risk and dysfunctional were placed in the accounts. More than elaborating on

a taxonomy of discourses observed, the following pages analyse its interrelated nature, as there are no such definitive boundaries. Discourses observed overlap and are mostly intertwined, mixing and reinforcing each other, but in some places, they also contradict each other, which is a feature of the dialectic struggles taking place across discursive constructions. I will distinguish the most dominant discourses while analysing the links with other subtler discourses and themes, developed in previous chapters.

Table 5 below offers an overview of the main explicit relations between the themes emerging from the thematic analysis and the identified underlying discourses. Although not every discursive element is covered here, it provides a way of mapping out the process by which practitioners' constructions reflect discourses that are gendered. As analysed in chapter six, the intersectional analysis showed that these are also incorporating ethnicity and class as sources of bias, adding other discourses.

Table 5. Themes and narratives and their underpinning discourses

Themes	Accounts/narratives
1.Fulfilment of the marental role	"It has been reinforced in the mother the need to *fulfil the marental role*" (Team 2). "The mother is neglectful, *she must stick to her protective role*, denormalise abusive patterning within the family dynamics" (Team 1). "Some advice is given, *reminding* her of *her role as mother and the need to focus on that"*. (Team 3).
2.Expectations of mothers -Mothers expected to postpone themselves. -The scrutiny of mothers.	"The mother's commitment has been deficient, not putting the needs of her children before her own" (T1). She has not complied with the agreement regarding postponing the start of a new relationship to privilege the care of her child" (T 1). "The mother in is the category of *partial dysfunctional parenting* as she shows important failures in relevant aspects of the *marental role"* (T 2). "The mother was found as lacking protective capacity and being neglectful" (T 3).
Discourse	**Parenting roles as normative mothering**
Themes	Accounts/narratives
3.Men's histories and violence: the invisibility.	"Regarding the father, partial work has been done with him... A close relationship is seen with the child (…) Regarding *the mother, it is with her that most of the work has been done*, promoting protective strategies in relation to her son" (T 2). "The mother is told of the process of intervention in the programe and the need to count with her availability, as with the father it did not work because he missed appointments and never got to recognise the vulneration against J. (the child)" (T 3). "The last incident regarding the child falling to the river is discussed with the

	father, who is diverting responsibility to others (…) When discussing the incident with the mother, she lacks self-criticism, trying to blame her partner for being drunk when the incident happened. But she seems passive regarding her own *marental responsibility*, focusing on the alcohol misuse" (T 1).
Discourse	**Satellite men/fathers and unaccountability**
Themes	Accounts/narratives
4.Intersecting risk factors/dysfunctionality. 5.Cultural background /transgenerational violence	"In the current situation, *the children are within a socio-cultural context with mapuche characteristics, living in a community along with extended maternal family, where risk factors are observed". (assessment report).* "This *violence is transgenerational*, normalised as a child raising style" (T 1).
Discourse	**Cultural Others**

Having shown the links I have established in the analytical process, in the the following sections I develop the discourses identified and their underlying narratives.

7.3.1 The discourses of parenting roles: the dysfunctional

Across the discourses identified, there was a parenting roles discourse, associated with a focus on child-rearing practices, employed consistently in the framing of cases. Two issues can be analysed. One is the gendered nature of this, resulting from conflating parenting with mothering. The second, a discourse of dysfunctionality that is also gendered, as a result. Through the case files notes, it was clear that the criteria to assess parenting roles was the display of child rearing and setting 'appropriate boundaries' to children, highlighted as something relevant. As gendered, that standard was more applied to mothers than fathers. In the separated families, this role was expected to be performed by the mothers, excluding fathers from taking that position as their contact was only occasional (weekends). In the few reconstituted families, mothers were expected to be the main authority for their children, the involvement of their partners in such a role being problematic. Whilst in nuclear families, at the same time a binary construction of parenting roles was enacted, more was generally expected from mothers as well. One one hand, they were expected to be in the nurturing, loving side, but, as fathers' authority was often asserted through violence, they expected this role to be also performed by mothers. Therefore, in different family arrangements, the *marental role* was central, endorsing a gender order that places men as less relevant. However, ambivalent discourses were seen in the construction of mothers as too permissive,

and thus, unable to set an "appropriate normative system of child rearing" and lacking a position of authority. In the cases that women were deemed to be performing as such, perceptions shifted to the other extreme, constructing them as lacking empathy and attachment towards their children. These narratives were strongly linked to the construction of parenting as dysfunctional, embodied by the mothers and reflected in the dominance of the narratives of *role*, as in 'fulfilment of the role', 'appropriate role', 'failings in the role', etc.,

The dominance of the concept of role was associated with the overarching institutional CP discourses, and particularly with the prominence occupied by the discourse of child-rearing practices. At an institutional level, this dysfunctional parenting discourse was situated within two interrelated institutional overarching framings: the violation of children's rights, as the dominant CP narrative invoked and the second, the risk factors narrative in response to that framing. As practitioners needed to report according to these institutional and organisational framings, as per the official discourse guiding SENAME, parenting was constructed as subordinated to the children's rights approach and the risk factors discourse.

The gendered nature is exposed in its contradictions as well, as an institutional discourse of children's rights did not always match the reality of strategies and priorities. As shown in chapter 5, there were cases where the gendering process in the assessment of parenting led to allowing men to perpetrate harm to children, as children's needs of protection were sometimes subordinated to men fathers' right to child contact, as exposed in some examples in chapter 5. Yet, in these cases, the mothers were the identified in the dysfunctional parenting label. As set out earlier, Barudy's capacity assessment guide was recurrently uses of as the main framework to classify parenting capacity. As explained in chapter two, this guide sets levels of 'concern, no concern or high concern' (see footnote 10), as illustrated below:

> "The mother with results in parenting capacity in the category of *partial concern* (…) Having to *improve empathetic child rearing, attachment.* (social worker, case files notes, case 06, team 1, emphasis added)

This classification results in parenting categorised as in dysfunctionality or *partially dysfunctional.* The category of dysfunctional parenting as a concern is important, as it was this assessment that was found underpinning the decisions to refer the cases to the CP protection programmes. Something noticed was the general tendency for fathers to be consistently constructed as in *partial dysfunctionality or no concern categories,* despite

evidence on files showing cases and instances when they had harmed their children. Then, an operationalisation of these categories can be under question, but it also reflects subtle assumptions and constructions that elude holding them as dysfunctional as it was consistent for the mothers. Thus, we can see the implications these categories were having in practice. When searching for the evidence of such dysfunctionality diagnosed in mothers, there was the impression that in some of the cases, the perceived risks posed to the children were overstated. Some situations described did not seem to be compromising their safeguarding. In some cases, what was underpinning the referrals was the assessment of mothers as dysfunctional, despite no objective evidence of harm having been found in the end. What is more, in some cases wrongly framed within CP concerns, with thresholds situated as low and pushed by the categorisation employed. It seems plausible that practitioners became moved to find some pathology or dysfunctionality when a report was made. This is clear for the assessment teams and this can be linked to what a practitioner was reflecting regarding finding assessments reports that were all similar, with the families being found described in the same ways. Here we can again emphasise the role played by the organisational culture's assumptions. The families are expected to have some kind of failing or dysfunctionality to make sense of the referral. The practitioners, then, feel somehow compelled to frame and classify cases by providing a 'technical enough' account, the right categorisation to the court and the supervisors or other colleagues to become constructed as competent and knowledgeable practitioners. To fulfil such expectations on their role the safest place or the resources available are the categories, with the most employed in this sample being summarised in table 3. This is a dynamic of discursive practices in CP, identified in a CDA perspective, as what Fairclough (2003, p.24) calls orders of discourse, meaning, the network of social practices materialised in language. These social practices would be controlling the language variation, the specific language devices used in a specific context. As we have seen, the social practices in CP depend on categories that function as the shared language of the occupational culture. One implication is the process of these categories becoming scripts that practitioners employ, sometimes in a mechanical and routinely way, as noted by one practitioner when questioning the similarly of assessment reports. Following this process, what seemed to occur is that practitioners may end constructing families and their problems by matching the frameworks they employ, by the interventions and skills they can offer rather than actual problems. CDA reveals how their framings are the constructions filtering these actual problems. Subsequently, in the gendering process, the category of the *dysfunctional*

marental role legitimised a construction of bad mothering, endorsing a mothering ideology, which is further analysed below.

7.3.2. The discourse of normative mothering ideology

Constructions of normative mothering were salient in the use of the *dysfunctional marental role narrative*, as illustrated with examples in chapters five and six. The constructions of women as 'mothers first' was underpinned by a set of standards reflected in:

- The assessment of their moral behaviour (priorities, display of appropriate marental role, postponing their needs and putting those of their children above)
- The assessment of their attachment and empathy toward their children.
- The assessment of their protectiveness in the handling of violence scenarios.
- The assessment of their parenting competence assessed against standards of being authority figures, disciplining children, instructing in hygiene habits, promoting school attainment, etc.

This reflects a discourse of the social control of motherhood and the enactment of a mothering ideology masked with the narrative of parenting role. Mothers were judged according to the extent they were fulfilling the *marental role*, labelled as dysfunctional or within the category of neglect when standards of the *appropriate* display of this role were assessed as not met. What the standards were to define what was *appropriate* was not clearly conceptualised, despite mentions of Barudy's guide, with a lack of factual evidence, this seemed informed largely by tacit assumptions linked to constructions of parenting already discussed. In this context, it was the practitioners' notions of what is appropriate that appeared to guide the routine practices with standards for such assessments not clealy specified in guidelines but mostly driven by personal/social constructions that matched dominant epistemologies. Practitioners held notions and standards to make those judgments, legitimised by the CP literature that has become dominant as a discourse in itself.

Regarding the main constructions observed, mothers were found failing in fulfilling the marental role, identified in concerns regarding issues on parenting practices reflected in the examples of the narratives shown in the table below:

Table 6. Examples of 'marental incompetence' as constructed in the accounts in the case files.

1. Hygiene conditions	**"**Deficient hygiene conditions. It is necessary to continue problematising the neglectful behaviours shown by the mother for her to reflect on them" (case 02, T1).
2. Deficient children's school attainment.	"Lack of interest of the mother in school attainment of their children, not providing support, which is having an impact on their performance and behaviour at school" (case 02, T1).
3. Exposure to risk factors (violence, sexual abuse, parents' conflicts, etc.)	"Even though, it is highlighted her participation and commitment to the process of healing of the children, she is not active in recognising the abuse of her children" (case 03, T3)
4. Lack of empathy and attachment towards children's emotional needs.	"Lack of marental protection and attachment mother-child with both daughters" (case 06, T1).
5. Putting their own interests above their children's needs.	"The mother's commitment has been deficient, not putting the needs of her children before her owns. The mother has not complied with the agreement regarding postponing the start of a new relationship to privilege the care of her child" (case 02, T1)
6. Normalizing or invisibilising partners' violence. Not protective enough.	"The maternal figure is undermined, not being able to protect the children as *she invisibilizes and minimises the violence*" (Case 04, T 3, emphasis added).
7.Lacking appropriate skills to discipline children.	*"Although she is not exercising any kind of maltreatment, she has failed* in having enough availability for the child during the week (…) She is assessed as in the category of *minimum parenting incompetence* due to failures in child raising, especially regarding setting boundaries" (case 06, T 2, emphasis added). "The mother does not play an authority role. *Even though she is seen as a significant figure*, she is not educating in habits, *being neglectful"* (case 03, T 3, emphasis added).

It is worth observing the language use. There was a particular articulation of the discursive narrative to support claims of mothers failing their role, by first admitting some positive aspects, but at the same time emphasising there are standards not met. For instance, in the examples of the third and sixth rows of the table above, the narratives were articulated as: 'although', 'even though' followed by what is positive, what is met, to then emphasise what is not met and opening the way to conclude the failures. This reflects a property of language use that functions as a *legitimisation of discourse (*Fairclough, 2003*)*. Another clear example is found below:

> "Although she has been committed to hygiene, feeding and schooling of the child, *she is unable to care".* (case 03, team 1, emphasis added).

This language construction by highlighting the deficits found, and dismissing the positive aspects implies an evaluative tone that reflects a discourse of "not good enough". Therefore, the "not good enough" assessment becomes legitimised and the specific language form is persuading to assume that construction. Legitimation was also seen in the way assumptions were made from the referrals. They were regarded mostly as valid, as the interviews extracts show below:

> To tell the truth, I believe at some stage the mother was indeed neglectful, there must have been a reason for the child to end up here (interview with psychoeducator 2, team 2).

Similar reasoning in another team:

> Listen, generally, the social worker is involved with the significant adults, as, in a way, if the children end up here, it is not because of a situation caused by them, but by the carers, right? From the carers' role, all of them have weaknesses… (interview with social worker 3, team 3).

It seemed assumed that if the referral was made, there was a failure. Practitioners relied on the referral's construction as being valid. Thus, they adhered to the script of the failures, even when not enough evidence was found. In some reviewed cases, for instance, regarding maternal neglect, this did not end up substantiated. It is also important to highlight that given the discursive nature of neglect analysed here, this raises the question on how many cases are wrongly referred to the system. In chapter two, SENAME statistics revealed that neglect is the main reason argued for referrals in a highly significant number (see p. 18). In this research, clear and uncontested evidence of objective situations compromising the safeguarding of the children emerging from the mothers' behaviour was less consistent than for the behaviours of fathers, causing some of the referrals to be made. However, the ideological aspect is reflected in the discourse of parenting and within that of the 'appropriate role' regarding the examination of childrearing practices being salient in relation to mothers. This process seems to be conducted under another discursive device which is *impersonation* (Fairclough, 2003) by not individualising the women that are talked about but naming them generically as 'the mother'. This involved specific underpinnings discussed below.

The professional episteme of normative mothering

The ‘not good enough mothers’ narrative was constructed against normative standards that in professional discourses are linked to theories of the central role of mothers for children’s development. They include narratives of attachment and literature on parenting that made it salient, with Barudy’s conceptualisation of the *marental role* involving an epistemology that matches attachment theory. Discourses of normative femininity and motherhood, and an essentialist construction of women appeared enacted and legitimated by this epistemology. This allows an understanding of the taken for granted assumptions that, on one hand, were brought from the practitioners’ own experiences and imaginaries, but had, on the other hand, expert knowledge background to support them as valid.

As seen in chapter 5, the mothers’ attachment was part of the criteria used to assess them.The dominance of this narrative made practitioners focus on the emotional and psychological needs of the children, with accounts explicitly criticising mothers that put the material needs (food, housing, clothing, etc.) over the emotional ones, assessed as lack of attachment. However, from the perspective of these families facing structural conditions of inequality and poverty, it is reasonable to be focussed on the most urgent needs, which are precisely the material ones, those which allow those children to survive in an unequal society. That widely recurred judgment over parenting is therefore class-based, blind to the powerless position of women. That made them also gender-blind, by ignoring or dismissing the challenges involved, especially with the lack of concern they express regarding the father’s failures to meet the food allowances payments, most of the times urgently needed, but not constructed as a concern for the children’s well-being and therefore a failure of parenting.

7.3.3. *The discourse of the unaccountable satellite fathers*

As for the constructions of men, as seen in chapters 5 and 6, they were less visible, a process which increased during the progression of cases. Where men were visible, as previously shown, these were the fathers living in the families, mostly the Mapuche families. The discursive constructions of men varied from some negative portrayals for the Mapuche men due to violence exercised by them to more positive accounts of non-indigenous men, despite violence being an issue in some cases, and even in some, raising serious concerns. These men were mostly those separated. These men were consistently described in more favourable terms. The narratives employed included: fathers being committed to their children (despite no evidence to support that was found), and available to be engaged in the intervention, but unable to do so due to work-related reasons. There were failures to meet the needs of the children not always reported to the Courts (no payment of food allowance, no

child contact, and exercise of violence, not being close and available for the children) as shown in chapters five and six.

Regarding the constructions, they were less dominant in the accounts as they remained mostly secondary, given the absence of their life histories, as described in chapter 5. At the same time, the process of erasing current or past violent behaviour was a consistent finding, even in cases of sexual abuse. There was a tacit assumption of their distant position. This was well framed under the concept of *satellite men*, a key construction that although named by one practitioner in the interviews (see chapter 5), reflects a tacit assumption of fathers or men in general, in relation to children. This was something practitioners problematised significantly less than mothers' behaviours. They were satellites that orbited around, having sudden appearances in some cases, and sometimes for the worst, fewer times for good. It was tacit that their presence was elsewhere, rendering them untouchable and out of reach.

What makes this a discourse is a dominant pattern of constructing men as not central. It was mentioned by the practitioners regarding the difficulties to engage fathers in the cases handled, with work schedules often cited as a barrier. Within such traditional gender regimes, there is a structural factor that places the construction of men as the providers for families. Within this traditional regime, there is no challenge to this framing. From a gender analysis, in the cases reviewed there were cases of mothers involved in paid jobs while being the main carers, which were not considered a legitimate excuse as it was for men to fail some appointments and not engage with the interventions. Some practitioners, although trying to engage fathers, expressed resignation to the process remaining with mothers. However, as seen in the files, even when a few fathers were available and engaged, the centrality of the mothers' role continued salient, revealing an active construction that places men as the satellites, which support their unaccountability. Some practitioners were also of the idea that it is more difficult to work with them. There was general agreement regarding men as being more hermetic than women, less prone to disclose personal matters. Some practitioners found them overtly resistant, and less flexible than women. Other constructions were of them being unable to provide accurate and detailed information about their children and family matters, thus, making it difficult for some practitioners to talk to them about certain issues related to their children' development. In general, the engagement of fathers seemed complex, as reflected below:

Interviewee… And promoting the intervention with fathers is a bit more complex, as I see it, and is part of…

R. humm, more effort?

I. yes, that is what I see from the part of the practitioners. To me it is also my mistake that always, as I said before, we leave fathers aside. It is true that if he is the only figure, we will be fine, encouraging him to get active, but when things get complex, it is a more complex relationship with the fathering, *I believe that we always privilege the engagement with the mother*… (social worker 1, Team 1, my emphasis).

Other practitioners seemed deluded pointing out positively fathers' engagement when the evidence revealed they had seen them only a couple of times. Regarding this engagement and the experiences of working with fathers, it was surprising to find positive impressions, which contradict the reported lack of availability, as shown below:

Interviewee: Well, the experience I have had with fathers that have been engaged has been positive o.k?

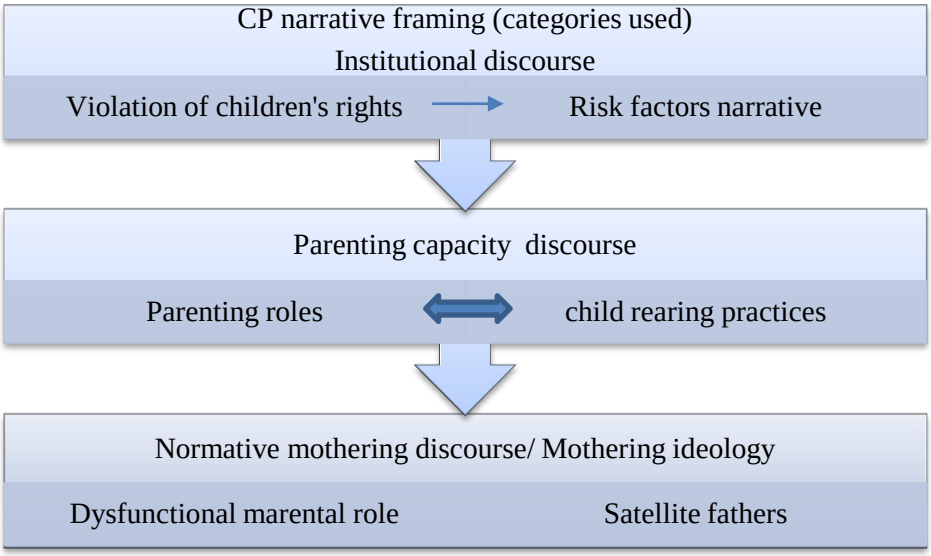
R. o.k

I. except V. H. [R. Hum, hum…]. He has the only one that did not work, as even N.'s father when he could, he came over here... [R. fine...]. He came, no problem. It was very few occasions, but he came (Interview with social worker, Team 2).

Something that some practitioners mentioned in the interviews was the key role of the Family Courts in making men engaged with the interventions. This emerged in this research as another site where the discourse of satellite fathers is enacted and reproduced. On the one hand, the teams involved in the ordered interventions were reinforcing their unaccountability via their accounts, with the invisibility operations described in chapter 5. On the other hand, also the Courts were playing a key role in the production of such discourse by not assigning them with equal responsibility in the referrals. These mostly addressed and targeted the work to be done with women, making fathers invisible and as said unaccountable. In some extreme cases, the assessment teams' recommendations for specific intervention with perpetrators of violence were dismissed to divert the focus onto women, as shown in the data. Following this analysis, the discourses around the construction of men are that they are irrelevant. The whole system kept them in the position of distant *satellites,* being somewhere, but not available, contributing with that to their unaccountability. This reflects a gendering process.

Fig. 4 below illustrates the gendering process as part of a chain of narratives building the discourses identified. The gendering occurs with women as central and fathers left in the periphery as satellites. This is the result of conflating parenting with mothering, materialised in the CP categories employed, such as the *marental role*, which was constructed as dysfunctional.

Fig. 4. The gendering process of CP discourses



This process of gendering occurs since constructions of parenting are set as normative, as reflected in the recurrent appeal to childrearing practices. These discourses are developed under the institutional discursive framing of the children's rights and the risk factors narrative (see section 7.3). However, bringing to bear the analysis made in chapter 6, it must be noticed that the discourses outlined were developed through particular narratives with Mapuche families, in the intersection of factors considered, as analysed in the section below.

7.3.4. *The discourse of cultural Others*

Emergent was a particular construction of cultural Others as seen in the assumptions displayed regarding Mapuche families' dynamics. The construction of cultural identity matched the pattern of some categories employed reserved for them. One important mention is the discourse of the transgenerational, which was applied to conceptualise patterns of domestic violence and harm. The way transgenerational was employed in the cases reviewed in this research was mostly linked with the concept of culture, mostly in Mapuche families, and when applied to one case of a non-indigenous family, it was conceptualised as the family

culture. This involved a form of expert determinism that essentialises features found as part of the cultural identity, which linked to a perspective of these families as resistant to change offer a discourse that frame culture as a problem, with the risks of endorsing biases and stigmatisation. The script of the cultural background enacts distinctions brought in the encounters with these families, a construction of the other's culture as displaying non-normative patterns, where normalisation of violence or dysfunctionality is observed but not in practitioners' own dominant culture.

That is probably why the transgenerational script was more prevalent there as it is seen as a patterning, whereas in non-indigenous the dysfunctional was more individual due to the mental health of mothers, or communication or conflict, more circumstantial, especially in better off families, as low class were more regarded as having dysfunctional patterns that seemed intractable, the family culture. Thus, there seemed to be a hidden construction of some families as part of a culture that it is dysfunctional. Through this construction and the moral judgment observed there was a paternalistic discourse of them as deviant compared to mainstream families. This discourse questions their cultural patterns in a process of Othering that divides between *them and us*, with class and ethnicity as the most salient identity markers. It shows a movement from the individual level of pathology as consistent with the dysfunctional parenting to emphasise cultural norms.

The ways this knowledge operated seemed part of the scripts available, that under the psy (psychology) discourse explains the issues faced by families as pathological patterns. However, this knowledge came to be used in a biased way as the transgenerational seemed to be operating as a prejudiced form of expert determinism that is reproduced within organisational guidelines. The framework guidelines produced by the team reflect the script later transferred to the understandings of cases.

> "The profile of the users is of *family contexts in conflict, relational and in communication*, on *a transgenerational basis*, and with a pattern of *repetitive neglect* caused by the responsible adults' experiences and history who have suffered violations of rights in their early childhood, without a process of healing." (Proposal and policy framework, procedural guidelines Team 1, emphasis added).

Thus, the lens of transgenerational functioned as a script or template. However, as mentioned, this is consistently applied to a certain type of families. The availability of this professional expert discourse also served to ensure that this authoritative professional

knowledge is 'transgenerationally' transferred. This is illustrated with an interview extract, where a young psychologist talked about the learning he did working in a dyad with an experienced social worker, described by him as coming from the old school of "stick-therapy".

> Interviewee: …She used to say to me: "o.k., o.k, fine with your theories, all of that but look, look at this (…) like practical things, like...
> Researcher: ah, like getting down to more concrete...
> Interviewee. yes, like (…) we psychologists are more psyche, minded
> Interviewee:eh, well, in this case, I remember once J. (social worker) told me: "O. K! why are we playing the fools? This father is going home anyway. We used to talk about the pigs, the pigs not wanting to get away from the mud, we talked like that, it was our metaphor to explain ourselves that they were all within the same mess.
> Researcher: hum, humm
> Interviewee: They are all dirty, they don't want to get clean, that was our metaphor, she said to me "the big pig is going there, he goes less but he does, despite the restraining order, the lady allows him, then, do not play the fools and let's try to organise a bit this story" like that..

It was clear in the interviews with young practitioners the transferal of discourses as the lens to look at the families and their problems, Through the transgenerational lenses, some situations were trapped in the determinist framework, as an expert knowledge or professional discourse, transmitted between practitioners, becoming ingrained and leading to a discourse that constructs culture as harmful and deviant, and overall as fixed. For the sample of the Mapuche families, this discourse was developed in conjunction with nuanced gender analysis rhetoric, as analysed in chapter 6. Thus, this institutional discourse seemed acting in the periphery of others latent, non- institutional discourses discussed here influencing constructions in the form of rhetoric to question the Mapuche cultural difference, as discussed further in the last section and illustrated at the end of the chapter.

7.4. The discourses in a clash: the gender perspective discourse, children's rights and a familial discourse

Being situated at a different level of discourses outlined so far, I have also identified these as shadow discourses having an influence on fuelling the dominant constructions identified. However, it must be noticed their display as resulting from a clash, or a dialectic process. First, the gender perspective rhetoric, operating not as underlying but explicitly,

posed as an institutional manifest discourse coming from the organisational frameworks. This discourse of gender perspective appeared overtly used as illustrated in chapter six and has been instrumental to reinforce the discourse of culture by which the gender norms are questioned in the Mapuche culture. Then, the gender perspective discourse, although generally perceived as imposed by the teams, becomes as discourse as it had a role in keeping others operating in subtler ways. As reviewed, it has a place within practices, as it has been incorporated as rhetoric, serving certain purposes, such as the legitimation of professional discourse and competence, complying with organisational requirements. Yet, as seen clearly in chapter 6, the understandings reflected the limited analysis and nuances in conceptualising gender equality, something that suggests a relationship with issues related to the arrival of gender mainstreaming policies to LA, discussed in chapter three.

In this research, in the three participanting teams, there was a complaint about not knowing how to integrate a gender analysis and how, while they are expected to do so, no specific guidance is provided. The contradictions found in this institutional policy discourse revealed practitioners seemed less aware of the extent to which in some cases they were enacting and reproducing or even reinforcing gender regimes based on inequality. This was done by endorsing the binary positions of men as breadwinners and mothers as carers, with a gender division of labour and parenting. They maintained the focus on the children's rights approach, which appeared influencing the dominant narratives, as shown in Fig 5. These two discourses became in a clash, opposing each other, with the discourse of children's rights overshadowing the gender analysis around gender inequalities. It was here where the prominence of the discourses of parenting roles and their gendered nature appeared undermining a perspective addressing it, with the practitioners feeling with little to do, as reflected in one interview extract:

> I think it is complex (…) I will make another analysis of this machista society where (…) it is always the mother caring, the father working (…) then, for a mum is easier to ask for permission in a job to come to a programme where her children are involved, it is understandable (…) whereas for a father it is like: What is going on here? That is for your wife! (interview with social worker 1, team 1)

As seen in the quotation above, although some practitioners when reflecting in the interviews were closer to being gender aware, especially the youngest, the feelings expressed were of having little manouvre as the social order functions to maintain a given gender order.

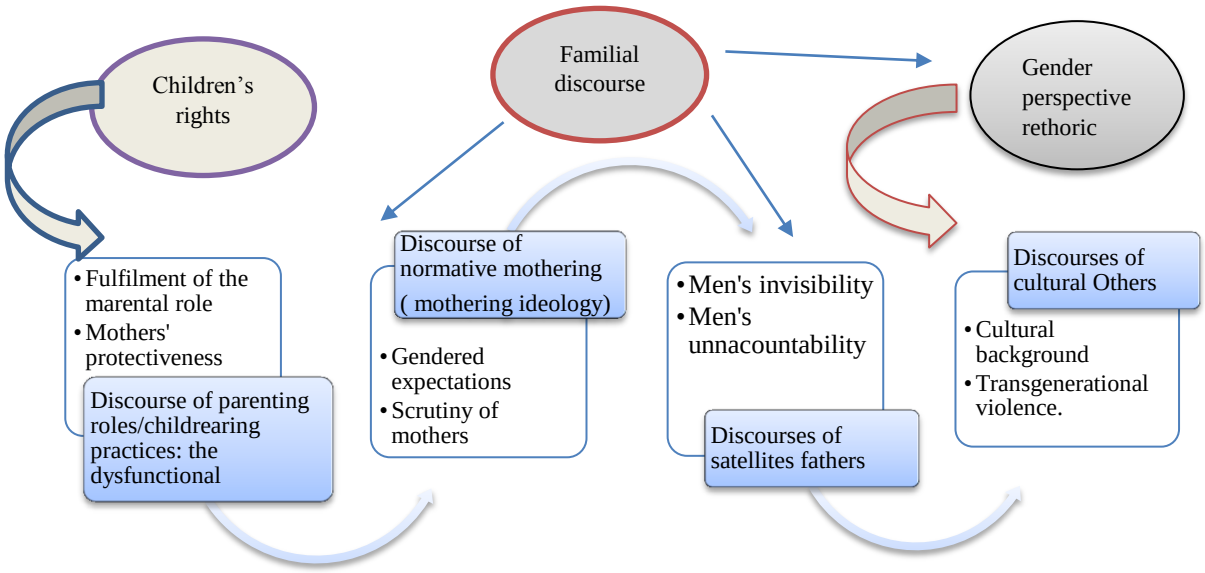
The assumption is that a gender regime is well established and goes beyond them. It seems they are acting in a mechanical circle that reproduces these gender regimes they were supposed to be addressing. Furthermore, as gender inequalities remained mostly unaddressed, the unequal power within the micro level of families' arrangements and also within the wider society was less questioned or challenged. As observed, the discourse of the gender perspective that we can regard as an institutional discourse, imposed, as the participants were saying, was more often in a clash and becoming undermined by the understanding of domestic violence as mutual or as communication issues, especially when responsibility was attributed to women. This type of discourse remained more hegemonic than the gender perspective discourse as reflected in the analysis of cases that consistently focussed on parenting and a de-gendered framing of the violence in the family. As a result, the discourses of parenting roles, dysfunctional parenting and childrearing practices were overshadowing concerns of domestic violence faced by families, by diverting the concerns regarding the dynamics of violence to 'appropriate parenting' with a hegemonic position of the concept of the parenting role. In this way, other positionalities as people are denied, framing users only concerning the roles they display within families, leading to another discourse subtly endorsed, the familial discourse, which was latent.

The familial discourse, appeared as subtly enacted in the circuit of CP assessments and intervention teams, Family Courts and agencies involved. This was observed in the consistency in family ties preservation, as seen in child contact with biological fathers. This occurred despite concerns exposed in the referrals, as reviewed in chapters 5 and 6, in post-separation scenarios. However, it may be argued that the latent familial discourse was masking the endorsement of the fathers' rights to child contact, and by that, their privileges. A legitimate right to child contact was not undermined or placed in question when evidence of the failures to protect was available. As such, it contributed to discourses of men's unaccountability. Therefore, under the family preservation ideology, the construction of the needs of the child as maintaining family ties had prominence over concerns of harm to children. This familial discourse was also reinforcing the discourses of domestic violence as communication and mutual violence under the notion of *dysfunctional interactions.* Then, the impact of these discourses was opposing attempts of a gender analysis, undermining the gender perspective, and resulting in keeping it reserved for indigenous families, the cultural Others.

Fig. 5 illustrates how I related key themes found with the underlying discourses enacted and discussed here. This last section is illustrated with these three more shadow

discourses acting as influences over the dominant found, along with its contradictions in an attempt to represent the discursive interactions observed.

Fig. 5. Dominant themes and underlying discourses



Summary

This chapter has developed a CDA to the key themes found in the data. It has explored the development of key discourses enacted through the constructions held regarding parents. Being framed by the overarching concerns of the CP system, discourses developed through a set of assumptions that functioned in interrelated ways. They relate to each other to reproduce a discourse of parenting roles that is shaped by a gendering process. This conflated parenting with mothering in the embodiment of the category of dysfunctional parenting in the mothers, which enacts a mothering ideology. In this ideology, fathers become placed in the periphery as satellites, as unnacountable. Moreover, as said, much of the assumptions found here, are not exclusively theoretically informed, they do reflect personal images of what it is to be parents and what parenting involves. The individual level of constructions is part of a common ground of discourses developed and shaped by the occupational culture of CP and their concerns. This defines the language used, while at the same time it reflects social discourses taken from the broader context. Institutional organisational frameworks have had

an influence in these discourses, but functioning in contradictory and competing ways, as seen in the rhetorical use of the gender perspective language that has ultimately reproduced gender inequalities. Particularly, it has served to racialise inequalities by contributing to construct the Mapuche families as cultural Others based on their pathologised gender norms. This CDA of the themes identified in the narratives of CP practice in Chile will be further discussed in the following chapter, which will analyse commonalities and differences with previous research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Discussion

This study aimed to explore dominant constructions or discourses found in CP accounts of interventions and how gender impacts upon such constructions. This study explored the context of Chile, in a Southern region, where the most significant number of the indigenous population of the country live. The exploration was conducted through the analysis of 18 case files and 13 interviews with practitioners from three CP teams located in different areas of the region.

This chapter will draw on the key findings to discuss some of the implications and explanations for what has been found. Drawing upon the literature reviewed, the research questions to be answered and the method of enquiry, implications for these findings are discussed. It is worth noting at this stage that findings not only answered the research questions, as discussed here, but at the same time, went beyond them, as issues regarding ethnicity were not anticipated as playing the role they did, emerging as relevant in the analysis of gendered constructions and, therefore introducing the need for a more nuanced intersectional analysis.

8.1 Summary of key findings

In chapter five the thematic analysis identified central narratives that underpin the constructions of mothers and fathers, where gender was clearly seen in response to RQ1: What kind of discourses or constructions appears as dominant and shared by CP practitioners in Chile in relation to mothers and fathers and how gender is implicated? The ways parenting practices were differently assessed by identifying mothers and the *marental role* as central compared to the role of fathers was analysed. This outcome was underpinned by normative constructions on maternal identity and the standards that made salient the responsibility of mothers and their protective capacity. A construction of accountability regarding children was gendered in the way fathers or men in general (as partners, carers) were made unaccountable. This, in turn, legitimised more scrutiny of women and meant that their personal histories were subject to more detailed exposure. From this chapter, the main conclusion drawn is the unequal assessment of parenting following this gendered patterning.

Chapter six further addresses RQ1 whilst providing pertinent answers to RQ 2 and RQ3, regarding the role practitioners were giving to gender more explicitly through their practices and also what was informing their approaches in the interactions with the

construction they held. In this chapter, an analysis of the interplay of different factors and narratives called for an intersectional lens. It was revealed that gender analysis was highly salient in cases involving indigenous families. The overt language of a gender perspective revealed tensions in the nuances of an analysis that moved between this perspective and narratives that portrayed dysfunctionality and transgenerational violence as part of a cultural background. Specific issues related to cultural competency were outlined. In this chapter, it was argued that a gender bias intersected with ethnicity, class and location, something which is necessary to reflect on the analysis of practices, where power relations become more explicit.

Chapter seven moves to a CDA of the themes outlined in the two previous chapters to examine in more detail the process by which discourses are built. There was an examination of the shared knowledge and language within the micro level of the CP organisational culture, but also as shaped by a wider order where such discourses are embedded. It was discussed that discourses of parenting roles masked an ingrained mothering ideology, highly normative and embedded in lay and professional knowledge. This was displayed through assumptions on parenthood that consistently emphasised a far greater expectation on mothers. The discourse of culture made explicit how discourses introduced different constructions of indigenous families, emphasising the cultural aspect as problematic.

In summary, the central aims of the thesis were accomplished as the research questions were answered, finding evidence to develop the argument of the gender patterning and the intersection of sources of identity and inequality existent in Chile that is resulting in biases revealed in CP practices. This is the first study of gender in CP in Chile and can shed light on relevant issues to inform policy and practice that will be discussed here considering what was known before and the conclusions to draw from this research.

8.2. The CP construction of gender

While finding commonalities with previous research at the international and local level, some significant differences were also found. The findings confirm the gendered nature of CP work as previously analysed in research in other contexts. Common pattern is a focus on scrutinising mothers (Scourfield, 2003, Humphreys and Absler, 2011, Azzopardi, 2015, Farmer and Owen, 1995, Swift, 1995, Hester, 2010), which was the case of this study in Chile.

This research has analysed how language constructions reflected and reproduced ideological framings with gender as a site of power relations. This became materialised in the

rhetoric employed, underlying epistemological frameworks and shared assumptions that centred the concern around children' rights on women and their mothering practices while endorsing normative constructions of femininity and masculinity. This had a number of implications that are discussed here.

8.2.1. Constructing men as an issue to address

Something the literature reveals and what is confirmed in these findings is that CP problematises women as mothers. Based on what are the trends discussed in the previous chapters I aim to challenge that narrative starting with problematising men as fathers.

Previous research in different countries has pointed consistently at the invisibility of men in CP and welfare (Farmer and Owen, 1995, Parton *et al*, 1997, D' Cruz, 2002, Swift, 1995, Strega *et al*., 2008, Scourfield, 2003, Brown *et al.* 2009). It has been conceptualised in Canada as the ghost fathers (Brown *et al.* 2009), the invisible men in the UK (Stanley, 1997) and Australia (D'Cruz, 2002, Parton *et al*, 1997). This position has always been the outcome of the mother blaming discourse (Humphreys and Absler, 2011) and the failure to engage men, instead sidelining them to focus almost solely on mothers.

Explanations proposed in the international literature were of gender bias, of men being predominantly perceived as threat or risks to children (Scourfield, 2003, Dominelli *et al.*, 2011, Daniel and Taylor, 1998, Featherstone, 2003). This is, for instance the case of Scourfield's (2003) study, who found that this construction was underpinning the lack of engagement. In this research, contrary to this pattern, while men were sidelined this was not for being negatively perceived. On the contrary, as evidence consistently shows here, men were usually described in positive terms, even when evidence of their failures or the risks they represented for children was available. This was a general pattern that only varied in cases involving Mapuche men, which deserves a separate analysis below. Therefore, there is a difference with previous research worthy of explanation.

In Scourfield' s (2003) research, men were only constructed as better than women when bad mothering was used to compare. In this research, mothers were consistently constructed as failing in the *marental role*, therefore more negatively constructed. One hypothesis is that, as a result of such discourse, men were constructed as better, usually as above in the parenting assessments. In these assessments, mothers were consistently found as of 'high concern' or 'dysfunctionality' while fathers were only of 'partial concern' or 'no concern'. As one practitioner commented she believed "both parents lie, but the father did it less", while not providing evidence for such assertion. There was, then, a 'not good enough'

mother discourse producing a 'good enough' father portrayal, when evidence showed, men had to do a lot less to achieve such framing. Two aspects seem to be a pattern. Firstly, that mothers' failures are overstated, as evidence discussed in chapter seven reveals. Secondly, such an assessment is not equal for men. Overall, men's failures were minimised and even misrepresented, as is made clear through the CDA analysis of intertextuality in chapter seven. Interestingly this is the same pattern found by Swift's in Canada (1995) of men perceived as positive when 'doing the minimum'. Scourfield (1999) suggested that "not much is expected of men" (1999, p.113). Therefore, gendered expectations play a significant role in the constructions of parents. The result is that men have the privilege of being less scrutinised, because less is expected from them and by comparison, everything is expected from women as mothers.

Swift (1995) and Turney (2000) have suggested that neglect, one of the main causes of referrals in this research, is constructed as a mother's failure. It is so because it is women who are associated with the household and caring, which leaves men free from scrutiny. As suggested and found in this study, caring for children appears constructed as a feminised responsibility.

However, there is still room to examine why men are positively constructed, when this seemed unsustainable. This is linked to cultural constructions. As the local literature showed, gender regimes in Chile have been less subject to change and transformation, endorsing a traditional breadwinner's model. This excuses men more easily for their lack of engagement and involvement in their children's lives, also meaning a tendency to overlook men as a threat or their violence, as evidence shows in this research. This is not to say that this is not a pattern observed in the Global North, and this is part of the commonalities. The claim is that this discourse that excuses men results in an amplified blindness to their failures as fathers as the expectations are duly lowered. It is not only the shifting away from their failures, but the misrepresentation of them as positive and 'committed', which differs from the picture in Western countries, where pejorative depictions are more common (Scourfield, 2006).It seems, in comparison,that assumptions regarding men and women' s roles are less challenged and questioned within the wider social order. As Scourfield (2003) analyses in his study, in the social work office where he conducted his research, there were feminist approaches available and this could explain an analysis centred on patriarchy leading to negative constructions of men, as anti-oppressive practices were emphasised. Such underpinnings are not seen in Chile, where more conservative discourses are common and as we have seen, even with a gender perspective as part of the frameworks for practice,

practitioners do not adhere so easily to a feminist understanding as reflected for instance in the approaches to domestic violence. As seen, the incorporation of a gender perspective in policy frameworks has not implied gender-sensitive approaches, and feminist discourse is only recently awakening after being systematically marginalised from public discourses. Chilean society tends to support more normative framings, and that is why a mothering ideology is more pervasive and less challenged by alternative perspectives. Religion and culture certainly play their part in reinforcing maternal identity, which was invoked in different narratives, such as the role as a mother first. This sheds light on the fact that, despite the mothering ideology being revealed as pervasive in other contexts, in Chile it is even more ingrained and less challenged by anti-oppressive discourses.

8.2.2. The satellite patterning

The implications of the differences in Chile are also reflected in the pattern of invisibility. As shown, in this research it was not that men were absent or completely invisible as they were mentioned in the reports and files notes, despite usually not present in the interventions. As stated, the fact that they were positively constructed shows that they were not completely absent from the accounts as research elsewhere has found (Strega *et al*., 2008). The satellite patterning found in this research implies they were a presence, a satellite orbiting around, which depicts more clearly those cases of separated families, the less engaged in the interventions. They were mentioned in their sudden or sometimes regular weekends appearances and whilst not always making a contribution, certainly disrupting the dynamics with incidents of violence. In the construction of men as satellites, they were allowed to evade scrutiny and control, which women as mothers are subjected too. Men at times disappear and then reappear to create further harm through violence and the disruption of CP interventions. By failing to consider this pattern, practitioners became unaware of the ways an unequal gender regime operated and is reproduced.

Thiara and Humphreys (2017) had previously identified the phenomenon of the absent presence to account for the pervasive tactics of non-resident perpetrators fathers through child contact. A conceptualisation of men as satellites allows for an understanding of this pattern of not a complete absence but an irregular and unpredictable sometimes orbiting pattern that can turn out to be extremely disruptive. The satellite pattern may be interpreted as a double side dynamic of men's positioning as such, non-involved, but also as practitioners kept them. Evidence shows that in specific cases, men were more available, yet no systematic approaches were undertaken. Therefore, it was not only (although needed to be considered)

men's resistance in some cases, but an active process of relating to them as satellites. Despite this different pattern in relation to previous research, the satellite positioning involves the same outcome as invisibility and the ideological underpinning of complicit exoneration of the failure to protect as fathers. This is built on a tacit acceptance of their position as not accountable. This discourse was observed as produced and reproduced through social and professional practices that rendered men as not an issue to address, coherent with the persistence of mother-blaming which has been described internationally (Humphreys and Absler, 2011). This patterning as particularly in the separated families opens the need to examine child contact arrangements and discourses of accountability within the legal system and services overlooking the risks of these satellite fathers, as satellites are always in control and out of reach in the planets, bringing in Hester's (2011) planetary framework, where men seem to be on the dark side of the moon. This emerges as a key issue to address.

8.2.3. The unaccountability problem: endorsing complicit masculinity

Men's invisibility in this research was consistently for their perpetration of violence and failings as parents, leading to unaccountability. It became clear that was not only an issue solely attributed to the practitioners' practices and their discourses but also echoing other voices represented in the accounts (Courts, other agencies, schools, etc). They appeared to converge in manufacturing the invisibility of men as perpetrators, something reproduced by institutions and actors of the wider social network involved with children and their families. Holding men accountable has been consistently an issue emerging in research in other contexts (Harne, 2011, Hester, 2010, 2011, Humphreys, 2010,) and appears also here, as an urgent issue to address.

One implication of the invisible/satellite positioning of men is that it is consistently mothering which is interrogated and scrutinised rather than fathering, despite men being the main risks to children. A critique of gendered practice is not only preoccupied with revealing the gender inequality involved and the symbolic violence reproduced but also with the structural aspects. In this research, the implications of not scrutinising men and minimising concerns regarding their potential violence and risk actually resulted in specific cases presented here where children were indeed harmed. Ethical issues were involved as in current practices in Chile, somewhat less attention is paid to the fact that there are real dangers in side-lining men, as these cases demonstrated. This has clear implications for practice, which in Chile needs to re-address the risk assessment that is currently performed. The shifting away from men's violence to focus on women is documented in the international literature

(Farmer and Owen, 1995, Parton *et al,* 1997, Hester, 2001, 2010, Harne, 2011, D'Cruz, 2003). In this research, it was striking to find that it was the case even in situations involving sexual abuse of children, where the mother blaming discourse erased men's violence and potential risks. It is remarkable how sexual abuse concerns were not scrutinised or followed up to the extent maternal neglect was. The dangers of this pattern involved something seen here and observed in research in other contexts. For example, Azzopardi (2015) raises this issue when arguing that CP can "inadvertently be colluding with the abuser and oppressive social structures within which sexual violence against children flourishes (2015, p.269). We can then analyse, that *complicit masculinity* as explained by Connell (1987) allows an unconscious but pervasive mechanism of rendering invisible sexual abuse and its impact as there has been ideological work that colludes with men under a patriarchal structure.

In all cases here, constructions consistently questioned the protective role of mothers where sexual abuse was involved, by invoking the narrative of protectiveness, as it has been found linked to a failure to protect (Strega *et al*., 2008, Humphreys and Absler, 2011). The erasure of violence is supported by the familial discourse that endorses father's place within a traditional family configuration that is at the expense of children's rights to be protected and when child contact in preserving family ties is put at the expense of children's protection (Hester, 2010). At this point bringing Connell's (1995) analysis of hegemonic and complicit masculinity is pertinent to explain this pattern of complicit exoneration of men' s failures as parents. Therefore, there is an endorsement of a privileged position of no scrutiny, control or blame, the endorsement of men's patriarchal privilege. Now, in this research, this complicit masculinity was having some nuances analysed below.

8.3 Racialised complicit masculinity

Gender bias amplified by class and ethnicity was pointed out in the literature (Brown *et al*, 2009, Swift, 1995), with even less research on the subject. In this research, this was particularly observed for constructions of masculinity as femininity was more monolithic, with the same standards applied to indigenous and non-indigenous women. One finding is that despite the support of the privilege of men, variations were observed with Mapuche men, who were more subject to question and control through statutory power provided by law mechanisms. Racial and ethnic differences certainly impacted upon practitioners' constructions as this male violence was more visible as well as the gender regimes operating in these families. This was not consistently problematised in non- Mapuche men, who became more invisible or overlooked. Subsequently, the invisibility of violence was not only

gendered but racialised and class-based, reflecting the social divisions of the Chilean society. Connell's notion of *complicit masculinity* as a component of the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be analysed as matching a mothering ideology, becoming racialised as it seems to operate by not challenging the hegemony of non-indigenous men and turning the indigenous into subaltern or subordinated, in a dominant colonialist culture that constructs a cultural Other, as analysed in the literature (Bacigalupo, 2003, Miles, 1989, van Dijk, 1993). There seemed to be a racialised gender regime that sees violence in one, the disempowered culture but not in the dominant hegemonic one which is the system perpetrating discrimination and creating the structural conditions to exacerbate the violence in the less privileged. I do not see this mechanism as deliberate but rather the result of an unconscious bias, as the endorsement of male hegemony becomes racialised following the patriarchal pattern shaped through colonisation, where white masculinity was set as the hegemonic norm (see chapter three).This a case for a racialised hegemonic and complicit masculinity, something integrated by scholars of indigenous masculinity in the region (Hernandez, 1998, Viveros, 2003, 2016) and a support for decolonialists' claims regarding the racial hierarchies reproduced through coloniality still operating. In this research, the racialisation process must be highglighted as the State has been found applying discrimination and oppressive measures with the Mapuche people. As found in other studies where ethnic groups are represented in CP systems, colonialist and assimilationist practices become an issue and can be linked to the historical shaping of Chilean society resulting from colonisation and the racial prejudice imported. This is overtly played out in human rights violations perpetrated by the State, as fully described in chapter 2. It can be understood as an outcome of the reproduction of violence shaped by colonisation, a form of what I called *colonialismo criollo* (creole colonialism), imported but fully internalised by State institutions.

These racialised hierarchies had and clearly have implications in practice. Those men getting consistently away with their violence were non-indigenous middle-class men, while Mapuche men where those more likely to be constructed as under suspicion and control in allegations of sexual abuse, for instance. For non-indigenous men, in cases where, even with substantiated information available in the file, this was overlooked and not considered part of the concerns. This is evidence of how crucial addressing these biases in practice is, as it may result in wrongly holding accusations in some cases of indigenous men while dismissing concerns in others, non-indigenous, and, as a result, colluding with privileged perpetrators on the basis of racial and class bias. International research has also documented this issue as a

clear concern in the context with indigenous communities (Swift, 1995, Brown *et al*, 2009, Lonne *et al*., 2009). It emerges in this research as something to explore further.

8.4. The construction of gender identities and epistemologies

In pursuing an understanding of CP practice as described here, there is a need to look at frameworks. Something clear in this research is the use of frameworks informing practice, visible in the use of categories and concepts, analysed in chapter seven and shown throughout the data reviewed. One of the fundamental questions of this research was concerned precisely with the interaction of frameworks as theories and constructions emerging. As shown, discourses were found to be underpinned by an organisational culture that encourages the reproduction of expert language, as a vehicle of theories and models to examine parenting capacity. There is then, the need to unpack these epistemologies that support the discourses outlined, as they were found acting like scripts. A display of lay and professional knowledge in CP has been discussed by Scourfield and Pithouse (2006). This privileges certain expert knowledge to support the common-sense constructions of the organisational culture that is dawning on society. On one hand, there are normative constructions that are the common-sense assumptions unpacked within the CDA examination in this thesis, particularly regarding parenthood. Practitioners as part of the wider social order bring to their work with families the ideologies that are valid truths and common sense in their culture, which in Chile have been found to be maternalist and endorsing traditional family arrangements, particularly in parenting practices.

The use of personal experiences and values into professional practice has been documented in Swift (1995) and Scourfield (2003) and in recent research on decision making which shows that this a consistent source employed in the reasoning behind approaches to families (Benbenishty *et al*, 2015) as seen in this research. This is linked to moral assessment that is identified in research on practices (Kedell, 2011, Parton *et al* 1997) where, as discussed, the focus is mothering behaviours. This is valid for Chile and the shaping of cultural traits. What can contribute to the commonalities is that this lay knowledge interacts with expert discourses. These are not particular to any culture but are to be found in the domain of professional knowledge. They may be global or transnational, as dominant discourses are drawn from disciplinary discourses (Peckover, 2014, Healy, 2015). In this research, they were within developmental psychology, mainly.

In a recent discourse analysis by Azzopardi *et al*, (2017) theories of child abuse underpinning the failure to protect discourse has described how the construction of women as

responsible is reproduced in theories that support a normative motherhood, while the same was noted by Lapierre (2008). This has been clearly dominant in the use of attachment theory that was found invoked in practitioners' assessment of maternal identity, as in most CP systems (Keddell, 2011, Azzopardi *et al*., 2017, Daniel and Taylor, 1999). The maternal deprivation model, or as Lapierre (2008) put it 'the deficit model of mothering' has been found to match the cultural construction of the motherhood ideals brought to practices with families. In Chile it is found underpinning the social protection policy of *Chile Crece Contigo* (see chapter two) and from there, children's services, validating the Psy (psychology) discourse that has moved practitioners to conceptualise family problems under explanations centred on pathology and dysfunction. Such has been the dysfunctional *marental* category, consistently employed here. Barudy's conceptualisation of parenting capacity and the essentialist position assumed has provided an epistemological underpinning for a culturally established mother-blaming.

Here we can see the implications of language in expert knowledge and how they are necessarily linked to assumptions analysed in the CDA chapter. Regarding this issue, there has been debate on the use of language that is gendered or rather gender neutral. Daniel *et al*, (2005) had criticised the use of neutral parents in policies for children in England and Wales, while Featherstone (1998) has warned of the complexities of gendered language that can reinforce gendered division, trapping women as mothers even more. In the case of the *marental role*, there has been no research to this date. This is the first study where the introduction of this concept, a neologism, as informed previously is made visible. The findings from this research suggest that distinguishing marental from a neutral parental has resulted in mothers being identified as the "dysfunctional" and always below the parental role. There is no research to compare whether a gender-neutral language would produce different outcomes. In the UK, where this is the case, issues of gendered practice have been found (Daniel and Taylor, 1999). This should be an area of further research and reflection as it is embedded within CP narratives and, as suggested by the findings, it is impacting on approaches. Through this thesis, it has been claimed that language is not neutral and involves the reproduction of ideologies, which appears to be the case with the marental role concept in Chile.

One point here is to notice how expert language and the epistemologies behind it are drawing on constructions, in this case, linked to gender identity constructions that are relevant to discuss for this context.

8.5. Gendered identities reproduction

Gender identity was an issue observed and part even of the dynamics of positioning for both practitioners and users. Gender identity became, then, actively constructed and reproduced in practitioners' discourses of femininity and masculinity. These were embedded in motherhood and fatherhood discourses, where parenting roles were constructed under a binary opposition that endorses the breadwinner model.

This process of identity framing was found less dominant for men. The data revealed that this identity construction as a parent first is not to be seen invoked in the encounters with fathers, while maternal identity is more salient. A similar trend was found in Parton *et al* (1997) study in Australia, where maternal identity was found underpinning moral judgment. This implies that motherhood is constructed as more monolithic than fatherhood. In this research, for instance, while the construction of masculinity varied for Mapuche fathers, motherhood was more monolithically constructed for indigenous and non-indigenous women, with similar expectations.

The salience of gender identity was relevant to the construction of gender in LA, a discussion developed in chapter three, within cultural studies and cultural psychology. The LA context has been described as pro maternalist (see chapter 2), with women's identity construction highly attached to caring duties, and motherhood as being central as it was shown to be reflected in policy design since the beginning of the republican Chilean project. Historical features seem to influence this design. What is seen reflecting the use of the *marental role* category is the persistence of a mothering ideology that in the LA context, has previously been analysed as *Marianismo* (Stevens, 1973, Montecino, 1996). Marianist ideology relies on father's absence and the mother's self-denial in benefit of children and reflects the enactment of a gender order or gender regime that supports the privilege of men or their hegemony as analysed by Connell (2002). The expectations of women of "putting their children's needs above their own" and postponing their needs reflects identity framings that can be analysed as Marianist dominating the assessment of the *marental role*, particularly around attachment and empathy.

In both the literature at international level and in Chile, it was found that men do not construct their identity as fathers first, although being fathers is, to some extent meaningful for the enactment of masculinity. Fatherhood studies demonstrated for instance, that the primary role of men is attached to being the breadwinner (Olavarría, 2005, Gillies, 2003). In Chile, low female engagement in the labour market supports the ingrained breadwinner model. This, in turn, led practitioners to assume this as the central task of masculinity and as

a result, fatherhood. Thus, the role of fathers is more within the economic sphere, as providers while caring for children is feminised. In this way, when the caring is under question is a mother's failure. However, when men failed their role, no blaming applied.

Normative constructions of gender roles seem rooted in a gender division of labour. This was made clear in the practitioners' narratives excusing men for not engaging due to work shifts, but this was not applied to women as active workers. To see the pervasiveness of this logic, in one case a woman was even asked to match her job shifts with the care of her child, despite the availability of the father who was jobless. Historiographic research reviewed here made the point of the nuclear traditional family and the breadwinner model actively promoted through different strategies, which persist in Chile as a pervasive discourse that limits women' agency and choices.

8.5.1. Women's gendered positionality

The fact that there were more negative constructions of women than of men in this research seems underpinned by stereotyped and normative expectations linked to professional discourses that essentialise women's identities. Linked to the reproduction of normative gender identities, a development that accounts for women's involvement in this reproduction is something I examine following Connell's analysis of hegemonic masculinity, positioned as a normative ideal of manhood. I suggest that, as well as this gender regime, supporting the subordination of women, the gender positioning of women as essentialised falls within the display of a *hegemonic femininity*, in the endorsement of a normative ideal of womanhood that was enacted within practices. This ideal is Marianist, by reproducing an order that complements and supports male domination and privilege, that as found in other contexts (see Gangoli, 2017, Gangoli and Rew, 2011) points at women regulating women to conform to gender norms by constructing a normative womanhood and femininity with motherhood mostly viewed as a destiny. This has been analysed as historically embedded in the social construction of motherhood by a feminised social work profession, embodying the *beneficent maternalism* as analysed by Pieper Mooney (2009) in chapter two. This seems to be shaping practices and particularly, when family is involved, as seen in the subtle familial discourse, also reproduced by the Courts. Taking the literature from Chile, it has been found that Family Courts are predominantly female, reflecting how maternalist discourse is embraced at this level.

A situated conceptualisation of gender in Chile, as in LA must make visible the legacies of naturalistic or essentialised constructions played out in public discourses and

institutions in different historical periods. This includes pre-colonial regimes where the biological attributes were embraced within an understanding of complementary gender relations in the indigenous cosmology that reproduce gendered roles, masking hierarchies as a natural order, which remains until today. Some of these essentialised perspectives are embraced by LA scholars, including feminists, about femininity and masculinity and some Mapuche women in acts of resistance against coloniality. I argue the persistence of an essentialist position as analysed by Spivak (1988). The "strategic essentialism" is enacted as a resource of identity to assert difference in the need to cope with assimilationist strategies.

Thus, I understand the gender order in LA as the result of the meeting of two traditions, the normative framing of colonialist Western Catholic values, with the endorsement of Marianismo and the indigenous worldview of complementary gender relations. I would suggest a strong essentialised binary construction of gender in LA with femininity and masculinities more monolithically enacted. This explains for instance how widespread violence against women is, as deviance from traditional gender norms is less tolerated. Women endorse their own sacrifice and self-abnegation as natural as research in *Marianismo* has shown (Montecino, 1996, Murray, 2015, Finno-Velasquez and Nwabuzor, 2017) and pose that identity construction as the only one possible for other women. It is also applicable to indigenous women endorsing tradition (Richards, 2004). Here, it is important to emphasise culture in this patterning, in constructing and reproducing gender identities and relations that are played out in social practices and certainly in organisational cultures.

8.6. Gendered approaches to violence and fragmented practices

The gendering pattern and bias as reflected in the understandings and professional and institutional approaches to violence was a finding of the literature (Douglas and Walsh, 2010, Hester, 2011), with the debate on its conceptualisation found in this study. Departing from the problematisation of Chilean legislation as intra-family violence, which, as discussed, is of family preservation (Casas y Vargas, 2011), this was found to be impacting on approaches to violence taking place in the families. On one hand, the implementation of policies makes a gender perspective an objective to achieve through practices, which as seen here, is in a clash with some prevailing narratives that prevent its success in the persistence of degendering violence. There seemed to be subtle discourses on family preservation that made gender analysis much more invisible or at least unconsciously resisted. This was more reserved as seen for Mapuche families, legitimising the construction of a subaltern identity that problematises cultural background. But overall, sociological and psychological perspectives

of dysfunctional interactions and communication led to understand the violence as mutual. So, this places the gender equality commitment in tension as it has been reflected in the path Chile has followed in marginalising a feminist discourse and preferring a compromise with traditional family values. In this study it was shaping services responses as discourses that minimise in some cases men's violence and make women responsible. This is one of the issues most documented in research internationally (Humphreys and Absler, 2011 Hester, 2011).

The narrow approaches observed here demonstrates what international assessments on LA say regarding the region lagging behind in the institutional responses to violence against women. Additionally, it supports building a case for Hester's (2011) three planets, through the fragmentation observed and how competing professional discourses fail to address the needs of women and children to be protected from male violence while lacking sensitivity to women's victimisation and needs.

In this research, discourses of parenting roles and childrearing practices were found to be overshadowing issues of domestic violence as the practitioners kept the focus on parenting. They seemed to filter and construct cases under such framings, with the same made by the Courts, failing to address violence, which practitioners recognised to be in many cases the main issue and not parenting.

Hester (2011) drew on Bourdieu's habitus to explain what keeps practitioners within their planets. Within a CDA approach, this is understood as the work of ideology making constructions available and reproduced through social practices, knowledge and language privileged. This is found in the legal definition of intra-family violence, which forces a construction that focuses on the family unit while erasing its gendered nature. Forms of interpersonal violence are not recognised as such, which poses the problem of understandings and how a gender perspective is undermined in practice by gender blindness to issues that research elsewhere have proven to be gendered. Coercive forms of control (Stark, 2010) were operating in many of the cases described in child contact, yet they are not addressed within framings that remain narrow and are, overall, family oriented.

Consistently emerging is the issue of overlooking risks of harm in post-separation scenarios as masked with the discourse of the rights of the child, something posed as concern (Hester, 2010, Humphreys and Thiara, 2003, Trinder *et al.*, 2009, Radford and Hester, 2015, Thiara and Humphreys, 2017) and seen as an area that deserves attention, as what is preserved is the privilege of men as at the time child contact was allowed in many cases it was despite failures and concerns over fathers'violence.

8.7. Reproducing gender, class and racial divisions of structural inequality

In this research overlooking structural and material conditions where mothering processes were taking place was common in CP practices. There was almost absent recognition of the diversity of experiences and burden according to class, ethnicity and location, with the same standards applied to women living in urban spaces with more access to support services and minimum living conditions than for those indigenous women living in the countryside facing material deprivation and a lack of support in conditions of clear disadvantage. This has a number of implications for practice as it is unsustainable to apply the same standards as research in contexts involving ethnic minorities has pointed out (Humphreys, 2010, Swift, 1995).

One issue is something also observed in Swift's (1995) research regarding the invisibility of material conditions. This is certainly the result of the neoliberal paradigm that has shaped CP in Chile and the reproduction of a global trend on individualistic approaches with theoretical frameworks that place responsibility on families while consistently overlooking State failures. This is particularly sensitive for indigenous families. They are pathologised with a stigma of incapacity to change attached to them in the analysis of gender revealed in chapter six. This matches previous research in Chile (Muñoz, 2013) regarding the ingrained perception of the families in the rural south as patriarchal. This is something that seems crucial as work with indigenous communities and in rural contexts seems to be increasingly growing. It is an area where practitioners need to develop skills and reflective practices to address stereotyped views and pre-conceptions they appeared to be holding. This seems to be preventing them from effective interventions. They seemed to be assuming these families cannot change while problematising their disadvantage as an individual or cultural failure. Also, the issue of deprivation in general constructed as dysfunctionality has been found previously as a very ingrained approach to families leading to stigmatisation.

The issues discussed here describe a pattern observed that is further analysed below.

8.8. A CP gender regime

Findings showing commonalities with patterns found in contexts like Canada, Britain and Australia suggest, despite cultural, geographical, socio-political and organisational differences, CP practice reproduces similar underlying discourses. As analysed in the first chapter, discourses of parenting appear salient as they reflect assumptions on family and constructions that are necessarily gendered. Given the consistency of the focus, scrutiny and blaming of mothers and the interrelated pattern of sidelining fathers to make them

unaccountable, this evidence suggests a CP gender regime, to bring Connell's (2006) concept to the understanding of the gender order that is reproduced through CP work, within its preoccupation with parenting roles, constructed as gendered and essentialised.

As such, this appears homogenising and transnational. However, this homogenising pattern faces contradictions when encountering an indigenous population that does not fit the dominant paradigm underpinned by Western constructions of family, gender roles and child-rearing practices as the standard norm. As research informs, the issue of assimilationist colonialist practices becomes reflected in latent bias that reinforces marginalisation and inequality within those minoritised families. At this point, a decolonial standpoint helps to understand how the clash produced is part of coloniality, the continous presence of a privileged Western paradigm that pathologises and construct subaltern identities on the basis of racial and ethnic difference (Van Dijk, 1993). Some research has pointed out the issue in CP (Lonne *et al*, 2009) yet there is still more visibility needed around the impact of colonisation and the surviving coloniality. Coloniality functions in the same way as hegemonic masculinity, in subtler ways, normalising domination and its violence. This stands to reason, in essence, the colonial project has been historically patriarchal (Mies, 1989).

These patterns in these different issues reflected in everyday practices support an understanding of the privileged positionality of men. As the CP gender regime endorses this male privilege by not naming men as the problem, and not holding them accountable but mothers, this conceptual framework becomes useful.

8.9. Reflection on methods and evaluation of the study

The research methods employed were somewhat unusual in CP, with the introduction of CDA, seen less in research in CP compared to ethnography. Despite that, methods used confirm assertions regarding case files reflecting social structures and relations in the interconnection of institutions and their discourses (Swift, 1995, Schmid, 2011), something explored in this study. Using this source allowed for an understanding of the micro-culture of CP teams and the network of social practices, going beyond the actual sites of research to see the operation of the Courts' discourses and other agencies. It may be argued that conclusions can only be made in relation to the context studied, the teams approached. However, it is important to stress the nature of their practices as part of a wider network of discourses, an approach that avoids blaming individuals but understanding their practices as part of an ideological societal architecture.

Critiques of interpretive approaches emphasise the subjective aspect involved within analysis, in methods such as this, where no operationalisation is made. The introduction of thematic analysis was conceived as a method to construct a grounded corpus by presenting the narratives as employed and balance over interpretation. However, the constructionist approach involved in the CDA necessarily involves an interpretation and therefore, in a sense, a construction of constructions. This does not limit validity, as in light of the literature using other methods, such as mixed methods research reviewed; remarkably similar conclusions have been drawn. These conclusions are outlined in the final chapter that also introduces the implications of the study.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

This study has explored the implications of gender in CP practice in Chile. Findings have shown a set of dominant shared discourses that circulated widely across the network of the CP system. These discursive social practices found in the settings studied contribute to creating gendered normative identities brought to bear upon the binary construction of parenting, which are reproduced through professional language and scripts that construct the dysfunctionality of families as embodied in the mothers.

Through professional discourses, revealed in practitioners' written and verbal accounts, an unequal gendered division of parenting was reproduced, underpinned by the gender division of labour, as only men were excused for work-related reasons from involvement with services and caring for children, while women were not.

These discourses are reproduced by the nature of CP work and the dominance of the examination of parenting practices, where adscription to models embedded in gendered roles that essentialise motherhood particularly, endorsing a mothering ideology is dominant. This mirrored a gender regime ingrained in social constructions of femininity and masculinity, which in Chile reflects the embracing of Marianismo, in the reproduction of gendered identities shaped historically in social and institutional discourses. By this, the role of women as mothers is constructed as being responsible for preserving a familial order that keeps children safe. Complementary is the endorsement of a masculinity that places men as fathers in the periphery as unaccountable satellites, endorsing a complicit masculinity that maintains their male privileges in a male-dominated social order.

Endorsing this binary has resulted in failures to address domestic violence, the most dominant issue dealt with in the CP teams, according to the practitioners. Discourses displayed reflected an ideological work that consistently de-genders its nature under the conservative hegemony of family preservation. These ended condoning and exonerating male violence, while gendering parenting in language and practices by placing women as responsible for protecting children from this violence. This endorses male hegemony and privilege, contradicting an institutional policy discourse of gender equality in CP in Chile. This revealed to be undermined by the dominant gendered discourses observed. These findings match LA scholars' claims of the State's complicit role in failures to address gender-based violence (Lagarde, 2010, Menjívar and Walsh, 2017). At the same time, it appears consistent with international research on gender bias in the CP system (Hester, 2010, Brown,

2006, Douglas and Walsh, 2010, Lapierre, 2010). In the implications, the operation of the three planets (Hester, 2011) is clear, with satellite fathers orbiting the particular planets of Chile, namely CP services, Courts and health centres and to a lesser extent domestic violence centres, but never positioned at the centre of professional and institutional approaches as women are. This consistent pattern of situating fathers as satellites, conceptualised elsewhere as invisibility, resulted from the discursive interaction of frameworks for practice and organisational cultures that reproduce cultural discourses reflected in practitioners' values and beliefs.

Some of the discourses found and discussed in this study have been the outcomes of research conducted internationally, especially in English-speaking countries. It seems to be the same, and in a way, it is, concerning a global gender regime. For instance, resulting from conflating parenting with mothering, as found here, similarities are seen in the findings from CP practice studies in other contexts. However, at the same time, it is divergent, because of the intersections of the historical legacies of colonisation that contribute to the particular shaping of the system as outlined in chapter one. In the specific case of Chile, the endorsement of maternalist ideals seems deeply rooted in religious moral discourses of the role of women within the family, which continue to wield influence within professional discourses in the construction of a monolithic and essentialised motherhood, mirrored by wider society. A second difference is the impact of colonisation in the reproduction of institutionalised violence, oppression and inequality. I have argued that given the interplay of discourses described and how CP has been historically designed as gendered, there is a State that has reproduced gender, class and racial inequality in its subordination to a global paradigm that endorses such divisions.

This study brings to bear a decolonial standpoint taking note of intersectional factors, suited to the context of the research. Central to the understanding of the construction of gender is the gender division of parenting, which is seen as a global structuring embedded in the gender division of labour. As this has been the product of capitalism, brought to LA from the Global North, it can be situated within the logic and impact of colonisation. This has paved the path to a gendered patterning of women's subordination which has become global. In this explanation, that goes from the specific site of this research, reaching the wider context in its historical shaping, it is necessary to emphasise once again the racialisation of the discourses of parenting found, as the work with indigenous Mapuche families revealed the tensions of imposed epistemologies and frameworks that ignore cultural identities and epistemologies, pathologising indigenous culture and reinforcing discriminative discourses.

Professional discourse, embedded in Western epistemologies has certainly become instrumental to such oppressive practices, legitimising State power over the powerless.
However, it also needs to be recognised that the racialised gendering process found in this research, occurs beyond practitioners' intentions as an unconscious bias shaped by the organisational and wider historical context, where these discourses have developed as embedded cultural constructions.

The findings and conclusions of this research have a number of implications outlined below. They are related to policy analysis, practice and research, respectively.

9.1. Implications for policy analysis

This research was more focused on practices. However, as these are informed by policy, some implications have emerged. One area is regarding the implementation of the gender perspective. As this policy was explicit in the data, it offers a view of the clash between this internationally influenced and designed policy and its local implementation. It adds to reflection in the literature review regarding the introduction of this paradigm, designed in distant localities by the international agencies to which LA countries are in a condition of dependence. As seen, the use of this framework has worked in opposite directions as acute tensions are evident in the reworking done at the level of services. Implications can be posed as calling attention to the problems of overlooking culture and local constructions. Consistent with a decolonial standpoint it reflects the need for policy design to be more aware of this aspect. This should mobilise a discussion regarding the politics of gender mainstreaming in LA and within that, the issue of indigenous communities and their own distinct understandings of gender relations, where there was more evidence of tensions.

Another issue to analyse is gender in social policy and work regimes. The continuity of traditional gender relations and the breadwinner's model is underlying obstacles analysed for gender equality. The way that gender regimes are seen at the micro level, in the family and social organisations 'arrangements, but also at the macro level of social policies and labour force regulations, is a pending issue. The cultural aspect is also involved in perpetuating a gender division of labour that impacts severily upon parenting. Overall the picture is that transformation and change is still expected from women. This chimes clearly with Molyneux's (2007) analysis of mothers at the service of the State, as it is made clear how policies, by endorsing this inequality continue relying on women to fulfil goals that fit

the State's designs, in different sociopolitical regimes. This needs to be addressed in policies cognisant of asymmetry involved in parenting.

9.2. Implications for practice

This study adds to previous local limited research on practices where some commonalities are identified. It contributes by demonstrating the impact that language, materialised in CP categories has upon emphasising negative constructions of families and the gendering process involved. Specific is the revelation that practitioners and policy-makers can unconsciously or unwillingly reinforce an existent unequal gender order in a broader perspective and unequal gender regimes at the micro level of families with the consequences described. Building this evidence can be used as a resource for training and promoting awareness on the current approaches to families and their underpinnings. This can pave the way to reflective practice, where biases revealed may be tackled systematically. For instance, the gendering process can be addressed by what has been suggested in other contexts of making men core business in CP practice and policy (Scourfield, 2006).

To address that, epistemologies need to be re-examined and particularly frameworks for the assessment of parenting that have been found contributing to mother-blaming and observed in frameworks for parenting assessment. This should be in line with an analysis of the implementation of the gender perspective that seems difficult to achieve by practitioners who feel lacking in the necessary skills and training. Working with practitioners in unpacking these underlying and unacknowledged assumptions leading to biases found seems a worthy endeavour, particularly regarding gender in the context of interethnic relations, which is considered particularly sensitive.

Regarding the point related to skills, the analysis of approaches to cases reveals in different aspects more skills are needed in handling complex situations. Something that emerged is a process of the inertia that keeps practitioners applying framings and categories, adhering to expert scripts. It seems consistent with the analysis of confirmation bias pointed out in the international literature on practices. This is something to unpack with further research and also training in specific skills. Within this research, the skills related to the engagement of fathers were clearly relevant, approaches to indigenous families, handling of sexual abuse cases and domestic violence.

One issue not directly addressed in the research, but an observation throughough the process is the duplication of work that puts some families as participating with two or three agencies at the same time, with the burden that implies and also the lack of integrated

responses. Although in the organisational culture of CP in Chile, coordination exists at an informal level, exploring the benefits of interagency training and work may help to prevent duplication of intervention and fragmentation. This may be an area for potential development, particularly in the dynamics of post-separation scenarios, and issues around violence in child contact, something discussed in the international literature and here in situations of risk or harm to the children.

In line with that, policy and practice need to be more aware of the differing positions of users according to social class, geographical belonging, ethnicity and gender. Especially crucial is the need to advance the operationalisation and training in the intercultural approach that this research found to be in tension. This is relevant to overcoming assimilationist approaches and biased thinking. Something noted in this research is how contextual factors, namely the structural conditions of deprivation, poverty and inequality are overlooked and rarely considered. This is reflected in narratives shown in the data, but also in case files' information being particularly poor regarding socioeconomic and the demographic data of families. There is an urgent need for practitioners to be more sensitive to structural conditions, challenging the naturalisation that prevents them from being critical of Chile's inequality. I see this naturalisation as an effect of the neoliberal ideology that matches professional frameworks centred on individual pathology in disregard of material sources of inequality and social harm.

9.3. Implications for research

This research outlines findings that point the urgent need for further research related to policy and practice in CP and also domestic violence. Firstly, the need to explore the experiences of families and document their voices, which appeared underrepresented in general in research conducted in Chile. This would help explore whether the analysis presented here represents what they experience in contact with services. Particularly, the experiences of children in the services could be addressed in more detail. Of particular interest would be to explore the experiences of Mapuche families, to inform culturally sensitive approaches.

Another area of research is the approaches to violence outlined here and how competing perspectives can undermine efforts to tackle the issue. The relationship across professional services in the CP and domestic violence services and the mental health units can be explored to see how integrated responses can be achieved. A case for Hester's (2011) three planets is raised in the context of Chile, needing research to inform policy and practice.

Specifically, the risks posed to children in the context of child contact with birth fathers who perpetrate violence needs a closer examination regarding decision-making. This may involve research on the discourses in the judicial system by examining further sources of bias that were outlined in this research and have been found by research in other contexts (MacDonald, 2010, 2017).

9.4. My contribution to knowledge

This study, the first exploring the implications of gender in CP in Chile contributes to revealing the gendered patterning analysed and can potentially promote awareness to better inform policy and practice.

Regarding a contribution to existing knowledge, while contributing to gender and cultural studies, it can be placed within the study of practices in CP work, where the use of CDA adds to the few studies employing this type of method. At a conceptual level, it offers a new development for Connell's concepts of gender regimes, hegemonic and complicit masculinities as they have been applied to the organisational culture of CP and in conjunction with a new understanding of Marianismo as a gender regime.

I have introduced the conceptualisation of *satellite fathers*, as reflecting the particular pattern found, complementing Hester's (2011) planetary model to reflect on the dynamics of rendering men unaccountable and in the periphery.

In the understanding of these gendered mechanisms in the context of LA, I have conceptualised the reproduction of an essentialised normative female identity, employed by CP practitioners as *hegemonic femininity* to highlight a normative gender role ideology that considers the historically shaped maternalism in LA. I found it having an impact on professional practices with women.

I have also contributed to giving visibility to the clash between the Western rooted discourses in CP with the indigenous Mapuche people in Chile, with the results of constructing them as *cultural Others.*This adds to evidence of the problematising ingrained colonialism in institutional practices, where gender intersects with ethnicity and class in the biases analysed.

Finally, while this research was not intended as an assessment of the institutional implementation of the gender perspective within SENAME, it has emerged as relevant across the data, providing evidence of some of the probems faced that can illuminate further research.

Overall, this study provides another area for the development of the emergent field of LA discourse analysis, and to Southern theory by applying gender analysis to CP policy and practice.

9.5. Limitations

As with any qualitative study generalisability of findings has its limits. The analysis relies on three teams in three different areas of the region selected as this is a case study of professional practices, lacking representation of other areas of the country, where other issues may emerge as relevant. Having said this, it was intended to be balanced with representativeness across different areas of the region (north and south east and south west). Within limitations, there is also the sample composed of a small number of case files and interviews. It is not intended at making definitive claims but rather introducing awareness of the patterns observed. It was small, given the analytical goal within a CDA approach that is difficult to accomplish with large data sets.

A clear limitation of this study is the lack of visibility of children's voices. Although during the review of case files I looked at approaches to children's interventions I did not include such accounts as part of the data corpus given time constraints to develop the project and since the focus was on constructions of parents. However, this emerges as something to consider for specific research.

Finally, at a theoretical level, one limitation is this study may be drawing on too many frameworks and concepts for analysis. I struggled with limiting myself to the framing for a thesis in a UK context. Unlike what I have encountered in the English academic tradition, in Latin American Spanish we embrace complexity in thinking and writing, bringing many ideas together. This related to an ontological and epistemological tradition that does not fit within a Global North paradigm. I should certainly write this piece of work in my own mother language (one day) as coloniality certainly becomes visible in moving between languages and paradigms, at the borderlands, where I have been situated through this project. This has impacted greatly upon the writing process and the ways of presenting the study with the inevitable language struggles in translating from one culture to another.

9.6. Concluding remarks

Departing from the last point above, in this study, I have pursued a decolonial standpoint, which means moving beyond Global North paradigms of knowledge articulation in an attempt to overcome the invisibility of the Global South. However, I have made use of

resources and evidence from the Global North as support evidence to make my study a valid quest. My approach to decolonial thinking is certainly the impossibility of erasing what has been said in the Global North but producing locally situated research. I have criticised essentialism and thus, should not exercise it here. We have moved across the oceans already and there is no point of return. We are no longer what we were, both in the global South and in the Global North. My quest is for building bridges in a transnational commitment to equality, with gender equality being fundamental, but also calling out persistent coloniality, as it has clear implications for social justice. This has been key, as coloniality is involved in many of the failings of the CP system examined here, as its frameworks are mainly imported.

Within such a commitment, this thesis has tried to visibilise the pervasive nature of gender, racial and class inequality as exposed in the network of CP in Chile. It started with a historical account to establish the continuity of State paternalist discourses and the reproduction of the social control of mothering, which as revealed, is still in place. In the current scenario, there is a lot to be done to make SENAME work better for families. Despite Chile' s apparent progress following the return to democracy in 1990, and despite the misleading records of economic prosperity, there is still a profound class-based ethos shaping State performance in different areas, and particularly in CP. The situation of poverty, inequality, segregation and discrimination against the Mapuche people is the picture of a country placed as the most unequal of the region. There is much to be done to overcome authoritarian and paternalistic approaches, materialised in oppressive professional discourses that still make the blaming of women justifiable. The State still fails to recognise the material conditions where the dysfunctionality diagnosed takes place. Indeed, in an unequal society in a far, remote place of the Global South called Chile, one way of disentangling these pervasive discourses is by making them visible. This is the aim that inspired this piece of research, in a commitment to social change.

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Appendix 1. Sociodemographic cases' profile

Causes of referral	Physical/ psychological abuse	Sexual abuse	Neglect	Child witness of domestic violence
	7	**5**	**6**	
Main identified perpetrator of harm or risk to the child	Father	Mother	Another relative/carer	Other non-family member
	8	**5 (**identified in referrals)	**4** (all male)	**1**
Type of family	Nuclear (both parents)	separated	reconstituted	Single parent/carer
	7	**7**	**2**	**3 (two female)**
Main carer	Both parents	Mother	Father	Other
	7	**9**		**2**
Socio-economic conditions	Poverty/low income/ deprivation	Low to middle (Minimun living conditions, irregular income)	Middle class (appropriate housing/job and income stability)	
	12	**4**	**2**	
Carers' education	Primary level	secondary	Vocational training	Higher education
	14	**3**		**1**
Ethnicity	Mapuche	Non- mapuche	Mix mapuche non-mapuche	other
	7	**10**	**1**	

Appendix 2. Summary of cases reasons for referrals, concerns posed by practitioners and main intervention strategies.

	Team 1	**Team 2**	**Team 3**
Case 1	**Reason for referral:** child (boy) victim of physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by his father. **Concern:** the father's use of violence within the family. **Strategy:** Trying to introduce changes in the father's child rearing style. Situating the mother as a mediator within the family and assigning to her the care and protection of the child.	**Reason for referral:** child (boy) victim of physical abuse perpetrated by his stepfather. **Concern:** the mother's lack of empathy and protection towards the boy, not preventing her partner's violence, the boy's well- being. **Strategy:** passing the care to the grandfather and keeping child contact with the mother.	**Reason for referral:** girl victim of sexual abuse by a peer at school. **Concern:** The mother display of the marental role, the mother remaining with the child. **Strategy:** Promoting her self- criticism over his past behavior towards her children, her abandonment.
Case 2	**Reason for referral:** Children (three) victims of maternal neglect. **Concern:** The mother's neglectful behaviour, as well as the female adults supporting the care of the children. **Strategy:** Sharing the caring amongst female adults in the family (grandmother, older sister) to support the process. Encouraging the mother to get therapy to improve her marental role.	**Reason for referral:** girl victim of Neglect, parents partially not fulfilling their roles. (domestic violence allegations) **Concern:** The parents' conflicted relationship and violence, perceived as as doing harm to the girl. **Strategy:** promoting communication between parents to overcome conflicts.	**Reason for referral:** girl victim of sexual abuse allegations against the father, not substantiated. **Concern:** the conflicted relationship between the parents and the child' foster carers as interfering with regular child contact. **Strategy:** promoting a better communication between parents and carers, supervising the contact with the child. Finally suggesting the return of the girl with parents.

Case 3	**Reason for referral:** The child (boy) victim of neglect by both parents. **Concern:** The lack of protectiveness, mother's neglect and lack of marental skills to prevent the father's violence. **Strategy:** making the mother responsible for providing appropriate care and supervision to the child.	**Reason for referral:** children victims of maternal neglect due to alcohol misuse. **Concern:** the risk factors posed by the extended family and the mother's commitment to the well-being of the children. Her neglect. **Strategy:** to promote the appropriate display of the marental role, keeping the family apart from extended family and community.	**Reason for referral:** girl victim of sexual abuse allegations against the father, con confirmed. **Concern:** the denial of the alleged sexual abuse by the family, the father seen as a risk for the children. **Strategy:** to empower the mother to be a protective figure for the children.
Case 4	**Reason for referral:** Children (two) victims of neglect, witnessing domestic violence perpetrated by the father. They were victims of physical abuse. **Concern:** the normalisation of the father's use of violence within the familiy and the mother's lack of protectiveness towards the children. **Strategy:** to **empower the mother to display a protective role,** to denormalise the use of violence with both parents through psychoeducative work.	**Reason for referral:** Statutory protective measure starting with the mother report of missing children from home. **Concern:** the well-being of children, their needs to be met. **Strategy:** to teach the mother to overcome her "failures" in the marental role. Visits and interviews with the mother.	**Reason for referral:** girl victim of sexual abuse, allegations against previous mother's partner, not substantiated. **Concern:** the display of the maternal role and protectiveness. **Strategy:** First team: promoting awareness of the dynamics of violence and the consequences of sexual abuse for children. Promoting marental skills. A second team, promoting self-criticism to overcome failures in the marental role.

Case 5	**Reason for referral:** boy victim of neglect by his male carer (uncle). (It was physical abuse) **Concern:** the emotional distance between the carer and the boy **Strategy:** to encourage a closer relationship with the carer getting more involved in the boy's matters.	**Reason for referral:** girl victim of 'marental neglect' (leaving the child alone to buy at night) **Concern:** the fulfilment of the marental role, her recognition of neglect and the conflicted relationship with the father. **Strategy:** to promote in the mother the appropriate display of the marental role through work with her, making her aware of risk factors.	**Reason for referral:** boy victim of physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by his father and partner (carers). **Concern:** the father's violence against the boy. **Strategy:** The care passed to the mother. 'Empowering' the mother to protect the child from the father's use of violence.
Case 6	**Reason for referral: Children (**girls) victims of parental neglect, report of sexual abuse perpetrated by the father's older son. **Concern:** the mother's lack of empathy and attachment, the mother's partner as a risk for the daughters. **Strategy:** Encouraging the mother to assume a more protective role and improving communication with both daughters.	**Reason for referral:** Neglect, the child as a victim of his father's domestic violence. **Concern:** Parents' "tortuous" relationship and the complicity in hiding they continue together, the harm to the child. **Strategy:** working with the mother to improve her marental role to protect the child.	**Reason for referral:** boy victim of physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by his father. **Concern:** the father's use of violence and the harm to the children **Strategy:** to empower the mother in her protective role, 'empowering' her to challenge the father's authoritarian regime.

Appendix 3

CONSENT FORM

The information sheet provided explains the aims of this research and what participation will involve. If you want to take part, then please read the following information carefully and sign below.

Please tick where relevant:

- □ I have read and understood the information sheet and consent provided by the researcher conducting this study and agree to take part.
- □ I agree that the researcher can access and analyse case files in which I have been involved.
- □ I agree for the researcher to take notes during the interviews.
- □ I understand that interviews will be recorded in a voice recording device to be later securely stored and transcribed for analysis.
- □ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdrawn at any point during the data collection period up to one week of this having finished (end of September 2016).
- □ I am clear about the confidentiality of all the information collected in the process as well as my anonymity as a participant and that the only exception to that would be in case of risk of harm found to someone in the process, in which case a protocol will be followed.
- □ I also understand that the anonymised information will remain accessible for other researchers to access for the purpose of ethically conducted research in the future.

Participant's name ……

Signature ……

Date ……

Researcher' name …… Date ……..... Signature……..

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

What this research is about and why I have been chosen as participant?

You have been invited to participate in this study based on this organisation's experience. This study is a doctoral thesis that is conducted under supervision at the University of Bristol in the UK. The aim is to explore factors that sustain policy and practice in child protection services in Chile. The final goal is to develop an analysis of possible barriers to effective intervention that can contribute to illuminate practices and also policy design in the area. The outcomes of the study may be used for training purposes.

What does the research involve?

The data collection process will involve reviewing documents and cases files in site as well as interviews with participants. Thus, collaboration is needed in accessing those documents and being available to be interviewed when is most suitable. These interviews, conducted with those practitioners involved in the handling of case files reviewed will last between one and one hour and a half, being voice recorded to be transcribed. They will be conducted in workplaces, previous consent granted and signed. Topic guide will address practitioners' understandings regarding cases handled and previously reviewed by the researcher. Interviews are intended to provide a context for an in-depth report of practices developed by the interviewee.

What will happen with the information provided?

All the information collected will be used for research purposes and will be presented in the doctoral theses, which may lead to publication in the future. All the information provided will be anonymised to protect participants, services users and organisations' identities. Under those terms, the data will be stored in a password protected device.

Norms of confidentiality will be also followed given the nature of information accessed. However, this will be subject to issues that may compromise safety or harm to someone. When confidentiality needs to be broken, this will be informed promptly, following a protocol for that scenario as informed in the consent form.

What happens if I do not take part?

Once read and understood this information sheet, you can decide to take part or not, which is voluntary. This means that you have the right to withdrawn from the process at any stage of the data collection period.

Further information can be requested to the researcher at any point in the following details:

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Appendix 4 Case files recording template

I. Socio-demographics

	Cause of referral and referrer	Main identified perpetrator of harm or risk to the child	Main carer (s)	Family composition and ages	Family members educational background	Socio-economic status
Case xx						
	Child' s gender	Carers' marital status	Ethnicity	Other services/agencies involved	Health concerns/issues	observations

II. Recording of accounts for analysis (for each case reviewed)

Summary of current and past situation (number of referrals to the system, intervention start date and closure, if reopened and why, main concerns for practitioners, outcomes where known) as described on documents.	
Intervention process: objectives, frequency, main strategies (visits, therapy, family interviews, etc.).	
-Objectives: -Main strategies recorded and its number:	
Practitioners' narratives and accounts on the case (as seen in court reports and institutional recordings), including recommendations made to Courts.	
Court reports (number)	**English translation**
Internal recordings of practices on case files (meetings, sessions with families or child, visits, etc).	**English translation**

III. Summary

Researcher's summary of the case (including observations, contrasting of review and interviews, links between what is written and what it is said about cases)
Researcher's summary of case file review (key concerns from practitioners' viewpoint, main strategies and outcomes, main conclusions reported)
Researcher's summary of interviews
Final summary of the case

Appendix 5

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE AND SCHEDULE

(For interviews with practitioners involved in the sample of case files reviewed).

Interview aims

- To have a verbal and up to date account of practitioners' views on the cases handled and previously reviewed.
- To gather reflections made by practitioners regarding their views on families, especially parents.
- To explore in more detail the decision-making process regarding the intervention with cases reviewed.
- To explore the meanings constructed by practitioners concerning the narratives and words they use to refer to cases' situations in the case files.
- To gather reflections on the design of practices carried out and the theories, approaches and values that inform them.

Questions

Contextual/ general questions:

1. Can you tell me about your professional experience in general and, in child protection services in particular?
2. From your viewpoint, what do you consider to be the main service or provision this organisation offers within the work of child protection? And within that, what would be your main duties and role?
3. Can you tell me about the process of designing interventions with cases? Is there any particular theoretical approach or framework informing the process? If so, how do you see the interaction with your personal views within the intervention process?

Specific/topic related questions:

4. Can you describe the main challenges you have faced in this job? How have you managed to go through those? Can you put that within the context of one case in particular? For instance in the cases (specific cases reviewed)
5. What would be the main aspects you consider as relevant in the work with families

that have been assessed as ‘at risk’? Can you contextualise it in the cases of xx

6. How do you think parenting practices are influencing this/these cases?
7. In general, how do you see the role and engagement of mothers and fathers in professional interventions? Are there any differences? Tell me about your experiences of working with mothers and fathers.
8. How do you think this engagement impact on the intervention process and the outcomes? How this can be seen in cases xx?
9. In the work with parents, it appears that parenting becomes involved, and particularly from SENAME guidelines, parenting capacity, as something relevant. How do you approach such concept? What would be involved in that?
10. Regarding the decision –making process involved in children’s safeguard, what you consider to be key considerations to take into account when suggesting any measure to Family Courts.
11. Thinking about the process by which you translate your understanding of a case to the report sent to the Courts, what would be the key things you consider for your accounts to make the situation as clearer as possible for the Courts to get the picture? How do you get to construct that process of telling the story of the case? What is guiding you through that process of having a professional opinion or conclusion on what is the key problem?
12. How prevalent is domestic violence in this programme? How it is normally tackled? What has been your experience in such cases?

(This question was added once practioners introduced it as a key issue handled)

Appendix 6. Examples of case files analysis

To apply both thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis information recorded as data corpus was prepared for each of the 18 case files.

Every case was organized as follows, first setting the summary of the referral and the process of intervention to then develop the account found in the files by comparing the internal practitioners' notes and relevant recordings with the Court reports available. With these two main types of accounts, in the third column, the analysis of the narratives is displayed.

Case 06, Team 2. Reason for referral: Neglect, child victim of the father's domestic violence. The case is referred following an investigation and judicial process against the father of V. a boy of 4 at the time of the initial report. The father was reported to the police by his own mother after finding him with a rope put on the neck of his son, on occasion of a visit, being the parents separated from some time. The case was treated as a crime of attempted parricide and was referred to the Family Court to decide. The Court made the referral to this program to strengthen the protective capacity of the mother and grandmother, the main carers. The contact between the father and the child was permitted under supervision following a forensic assessment of the father revealing a personality with narcissistic traits, self-centred and manipulative, as well as a lack of self-control.

Parents are separated but suspicion on them hiding the continuity of the relationship has been a concern for practitioners that see the relationship as problematic. The father is a teacher in secondary school and the mother is finishing a degree in Law, being a middle-class family, with all the needs covered.

A psychological assessment of the boy was carried out at the programme to diagnose any emotional harm, which was dismissed. The report did not express concern for the child narratives of wanting to strangle peers at school and the lack of self-control and anger that was much influenced by the father.

The intervention that lasted for 2 years and ended with objectives met was carried out mainly with the mother as the father did not engage in the process, arguing lack of availability for work reasons.

Team composition	Internal recordings	Court reports	Intertextuality analysis Narratives relation
Social worker 1 (female)	Internal recording of team assessment (01/2014). "V. was born out of their parents' relationship that lasted a couple of years. The mother lives with her own mother, who supports her. **There is information regarding the father's alcohol misuse, with domestic violence incidents against the mother. The father does not recognise his neglect.** There is no fulfilment of the parenting role, with parental neglect exercised by the father that started the referral" Social worker 2. Interview with the mother (02/2014) "Interview with the mother to start the intervention process with the aim of strengthening the **marental role.** The rights of the child are addressed, emphasising child-raising styles and boundaries so the child can validate and recognise the mother as an authority figure. Finally, the reason for the referral is addressed, being important to recognise the risks in the relationship between the child and his father. He will be called for an appointment to address the intervention process." Social worker (1**).**	Court report 1 (06/2014). "… Working on impulsivity with the child, expecting psychological assessment regarding the cause of referral. Familial objective Strengthening parenting roles with both parents. Working with both parents, with a progress made as both have been engaged with the process of intervention. Different issues related to the appropriate display of parenting roles have been discussed, promoting awareness of the child's rights and his developmental needs to guarantee a protective environment. To promote communication within the family. Communication between the child and his parents has been reinforced to promote his development (...) promoting a protective environment for him.. Social worker 1 and psychoeducator	The practitioner's concern over the father as a risk given the reason for referral it is emphasised on the recordings. However, this concern is not seen on the report, which emphasised the progress made. There is no mention of the father's denial of the reason for the referral and information concerning issues of domestic violence. The emphasis is put on parenting roles. On the report, it is stated that progress is made with both parents, but recordings are based on work done with the mother.

Social worker 2 (female)	Team meeting for case analysis (08/2014). "It is analysed that parents' relationship has not ended totally, causing emotional instability in V. (the child) He also goes here and there between the mother's and grandparents' homes. Following referral, the father was imprisoned, but later the mother dropped the charges. This is something the child does not talk about. The child is also using manipulation to get what he wants from adults." Social worker (2). Interview with the mother (09/2014). "She turns up to speak about an incident with the father. He was following her yesterday with the clear purpose of intimidating her. She and her family are a bit scared. She made a report to the police. Support is given making her realise about the harm done to the child as he gets involved in the conflict. Finally, she says she has asked for a mediation process for food allowance as the father is providing money informally." Social worker (2). Interview with the mother (10/2014). She provides an account on a Court proceeding with the father to agree on	Court report 2 (01/2015). "… In relation to the psychoeducative work done with the child, this has been interfered by the adults as they prioritise personal interest before the child's needs. However, some interviews have been conducted with him, working on conflict resolution, as suggested by the psychological assessment done. Regarding the familial intervention objective, which is promoting parenting roles, due to a change of social worker, the process focused on introducing the new team member. T**he process has been conducted only with the mother, as the father is working out of the town. During holidays, contact will be made with him to get him engaged with the intervention.** **The mother has been fully engaged, showing availability and commitment to the process.** The father has been in regular contact with the child. It is important to mention that over the last period, no neglect has been seen in the parents like the one that started the referral, being both committed to the needs of their son. To conclude, to inform that **it has been reinforced with the mother the fulfilment of the maternal role, emphasising roles and**	Not reporting information regarding the father's violence, intimidating behaviour**,** the serious incident at father's home with the police intervening. This information is dismissed, despite showing evidence of the same type of violence that started the referral. No blame or moral sanctioning on this. It is concluded: **"no neglect is seen as the one that started the referral…"** which contradicts the accounts provided on the report. Minimising or making invisible father's violence and inappropriate behaviour. Reports of controlling behaviour also minimised and constructed as a conflicted relationship. The blaming of the mother for keeping the "tortuous" relationship with the father and the harm done to the child not evident on the report as seen on the récords of the interviews with her. The intervention with the mother reinforcing her role and assigning responsibilities to her even when the child is visiting the father. Failures in the fathering role not seen.

	the monthly food allowance he will pay from now on. She said he was aggressive, trying to lie about his real income. She also complains about the father not helping his son with the homework while he is with him over the weekend. She is told to make sure the child does his homework before going with his father, as she already knows he won't help with that. She asked the practitioners to talk to him. Social worker (2). <u>10. Interview with the mother (10/2014</u>). On the weekly visit of V. to his father, there was an incident between the father and his parents, who had to call the police to control his violence. She (the mother) had to go and pick up the child, who was very distressed. She adds that she now knows he has finished his new relationship as he is again calling her or sending messages. It is **observed that she is not able to entirely end the relationship with him, as she reveals to be concerned about his life and whereabouts.** **She is told to be concerned about her son**, reminding him of the reason for referral and all the instability these conflicts are causing in V. Social worker (2)	**duties related to the appropriate display of the role.** Regarding risk factors, they continue related to the conflicted relationship between both parents, which, according to the mother's version is over, even though they keep a "tortuous" relationship. This is provoking emotional instability to the child, who has witnessed some arguments. This is probably associated with an immature personality or self- centred approach with a lack of ability to manage conflict resolution in both parents" Social worker 2 and psychoeducator	

Themes:

Assigning responsibility to the mother. Regarded as responsible for harming the child by keeping the relationship with the father.

Invisibilising the father's violence, controlling behaviour and the harm done to the child. Failures in the fathering role are not seen, assigning full responsibility for childcare to the mother.

Emphasis is put on parenting roles, rather than addressing the cause of referral.

Focusing on reporting that progress is made with both parents, but recordings are based on work done with the mother.

Concerns for practitioners: Parents' "tortuous" relationship and the complicity in hiding it.

Strategy to address them: working with the mother to improve her marental role to protect the child.

Case 06, Team 3. Reason for referral: Child victim of physical and psychological abuse.

An 11 years old boy, V. is referred to the intervention programme, following an assessment requested by The Court that revealed he was severely damaged by his father's physical and psychological abuse, along with domestic violence against his mother. He had been previously referred to Court for a different cause (sexual abuse against another child), but this was dismissed. In the assessment process it was found the issue of violence affecting him. The family is composed of the father (58), the mother (33), the boy and two sisters of 5 and 2. They live in a small town, close to the rural area and distant from the main city, where the programme is based. The mother of Mapuche ethnicity, but not in close ties with indigenous communities, having left her home at a very young age due to domestic violence and child abuse.

At the start of the intervention, the father took over the role of attending the appointments and taking the child to therapeutic sessions. Later, after finding he was preventing the mother to attend, the practitioners demanded the mother's participation, which she did with motivation. Some sessions with both parents, with the father denying the violence against the child and the mother. This latter, even though with fear, started to disclose some episodes of violence that had been taking place for years, since the boy was born. The father with unfinished treatments for alcohol misuse. Then, after a serious episode, the practitioners concerned about the risk posed to the children, made a report to the police, as the mother refused to do so. Then, the father got a restraining order and kept on working out of town. The intervention

carried out only with the mother and with the focus on empowering her to make sure she can protect the child from the father's violence.

The main concern was the mother's ability to challenge the father's violence and being empowered to be a protective figure for the children.

The case was closed with objectives met and with a new process starting with the sister.

Team composition/ whose voices	**Internal recordings**	**Court reports**	**Intertextuality analysis Narratives relation**
Social worker (female) Psychologist (female)	Visit, interview with the mother (10/2013). "In an interview with the mother, the programme is introduced. She is committed to the process. As an observation, there is a dynamic based on violence and physical punishment. Work must be done on denormalising violence. On the other hand, having left the house, the father was met on the street with visible drunkenness." Social worker. 2.Interview with the father (12/2013). "He says he drinks occassionally. He says he is the one that set boundaries at home, being very strict. There is excessive violence in the normative system, which is minimised by the father, who says that in the past nobody complained about that. It is necessary to work on child-rairing norms. Regarding **the emotional bond**, he says that is for the mother, as he is centred on the material needs. Work must be done around gender and roles within the family." Social worker.	Court report 1 (02/2014). "…The boy referred by the Family Court to the programme for being a victim of physical and psychological abuse by his father. Diagnosis summary The family structure is of male leadership, with traditional distribution of roles. There are **machista** stereotypes hold by the father, who says he is in charge of making decisions without considering the mother's opinion. She is in an inferior position within the family. The family dynamics are characterised by domestic violence and corporal punishment that is validated by the father. He is an alcohol misuser, having undergone unfinished medical treatments. He has been validated in the use of power with the methods of subjugation he employs. The maternal figure is undermined, not being able to protect the children as **she invisibilizes and minimises the violence.** The father does not acknowledge his mistakes in the display of his role as he validates his child- rearing style from being the one taken from his parents. He is the one in charge of taking the	Identifying gender roles as an issue to address with the family, with description of the **machista** regime on the internal notes and the court report**.** The analysis of family dynamics reports the father is rigid in his child-rearing style, taken from his own family history. Violence and subjugation are identified and linked to the father's alcohol misuse, while the mother undermined by him. She is portrayed as not able to protect the children as she minimises and invisibilises the violence. Emphasis on the need to be empowered to assume a **protective role**. On one report it is highlighted that she has started to challenge the father on family issues, which appears pushed by the practitioners to challenge the father's control over the mother. But it is not mentioned in the report the tensions when approaching the father and his attempts to control the situation. The dynamics of power struggle are not reflected.

Social worker (female) Psychologist (female)	Interview with the father (01/2014). "…Regarding alcohol consumption, he says he has exceeded the limits. He says he was in treatment for alcohol misuse but felt he was fine. He talks about an incident where the police came to the house and now, he must go to the Family Court. He went on to change his narrative about it, as he is told he is putting the child at risk by drinking alcohol. He is also told the mother will be considered for the intervention process, but he says she cannot participate as she is not familiar with the city and she has to look after her daughters. He insists on being the father and the one that must be with his son. It is evident that he uses violence as a conflict resolution strategy, that is validated within the family, using harsh disciplinary methods that affect the child and his sisters." Social worker Interview with parents (02/2014). "The father mentions that today he could come with the mother as they needed to resolve some issues in the city. They are told that both are relevant for the intervention process, telling the mother that her attendance had been requested to the father earlier on.	boy to sessions in the programe as he says he is the one with more education and the mother, due to her low intelectual capacity doesn't know how to move around the city. **It is necessary to integrate the mother to the process to empower her in her role, as a potential protective factor, in view of her bond to the children, being important that she is the one in charge of movilising in favour of the child and her siblings.** There is information regarding a report of domestic violence made by the mother, but she later dropped the charges. Empowerment is needed to ensure she can protect and look after the children. Social worker and psychologist Court report 2 (06/2014). "…Current situation: V is under the care of his parents…the ones in charge that the referred child gets to acomplish the psycotherapuetic process, with good engagement and participation. During the process, the mother has been engaged as during the first period, the father took over the role of taking the child to the sessions, not allowing the mother to do so. Now, both are coming to the programe.	On the second report, practitioners then talk about the need to improve parents' communication and collaboration in parenting roles, following a very tense session where the father raised his voice, lacking self-control. In the end, he is even described as making progress. The father's domestic violence been linked to alcohol misuse, with an approach to encourage his engagement with medical treatment, as stated in the second report. Thus, the practitioners seem to have been engaged with this explanation, putting less emphasis on the father's controlling behaviour and use of power as well as the cultural roots of the violence. They have witnessed the father's lack of control and controlling behaviour in sessions, without alcohol consumption. Yet, they tend to minimise these tensions. (Internal reaction to the power struggle? Coping with the fear of the threatening behaviour? Assuming a submissive position as the mother does?).

Social worker (female) Psychologist (female)	The father starts to get upset and raising his voice. When, he is told of the importance of his participation in the intervention he calmed down, denying the violence. They are both told of the importance of not denying the situations within the family, as no progress will take place like that. Then, the father gets to disclose some episodes in the family dynamcs. Collaboration between both is encouraged, with the aim to solve conflicts and share caring and childrairing, assigning equal responsibility to both father and mother, from a **gender perspective.** The father has been attending the treatment for alcohol misuse. Then, as the father left the office, the mother is encouraged to get engaged. She appears receptive, talking about serious episodes of violence where the child has been victim and witness. She is told of the importance of making progress regarding this by speaking of it". Social worker	Starting with the intervention plan, strategies of clear and effective communication have been promoted with both parents, aimed at conflict resolution. With difficulty, the parents have acknowledged incidents of domestic violence, linked to the father's alcohol misuse. Regarding this, he has started a medical treatment that has contributed to reducing the incidents. The mother, getting engaged in the process has been able to challenge the father in two ocassions regarding family issues she disagrees with him. This is relevant, as in the past there was a strong alliance between them, minimising and invisibilizing the violence in the family. Communication has been promoted, but there is still some tension regarding the roles they asume as parents. The parents have acknowledged their **failures in their roles**, seeing the domestic violence and getting to value having a good communication that supports the family dynamics. Social worker and psychologist.	The second report emphasises more the parenting roles and effective communication rather than the dynamics of violence, even saying the father is getting to see his authoritarianism and use of power, which is not clear from the accounts on the case file, where is seen that he keeps manipulating the family with fear.

Themes:

The mother assigned with the role of challenging the father to protect the children from his violence, pushed to speak and report. She is portrayed as not able to protect the children as she minimises and invisibilises the violence. She is constructed as needing to be empowered to assume a **protective role**.

The language used reinforces her central role as a mother. Empowering is understood as her displaying her role in childraising and protecting (**to empower the mother** in the **display of her role to have appropriate maternal skills in favour of her children, her protective role)**

Competing discourses: First: Identifying gender roles as an issue to address with the family, describing the **machista regime,** with the father rigid views and her subjugation of the family with his power. Second: more emphasis on parenting roles, effective communication and conflict resolution, the father's domestic violence is linked to alcohol misuse, being the approach to encourage his engagement with medical treatment, less emphasis on the father's controlling behaviour and use of power.

Although is described that some sessions have integrated the father, assuming an educative approach when addressing the dynamics of domestic violence, he is not the main target of the intervention. Following a restraining order, no more work done with the father, only referral to medical treatment.

Construction of the dysfunctionality of the family for not protecting the children and the mother's lack of protective skills.

Invisibility of the mother's victimisation. She is constructed in her duties of protecting the children from the father's violence, but her victimisation is less addressed. It was thought this should be dealt with at a different agency, the Women's Centre.

Concerns for practitioners: the violence of the father and the harm to the children

Strategy to address them: to empower the mother in her protective role, challenging the father.